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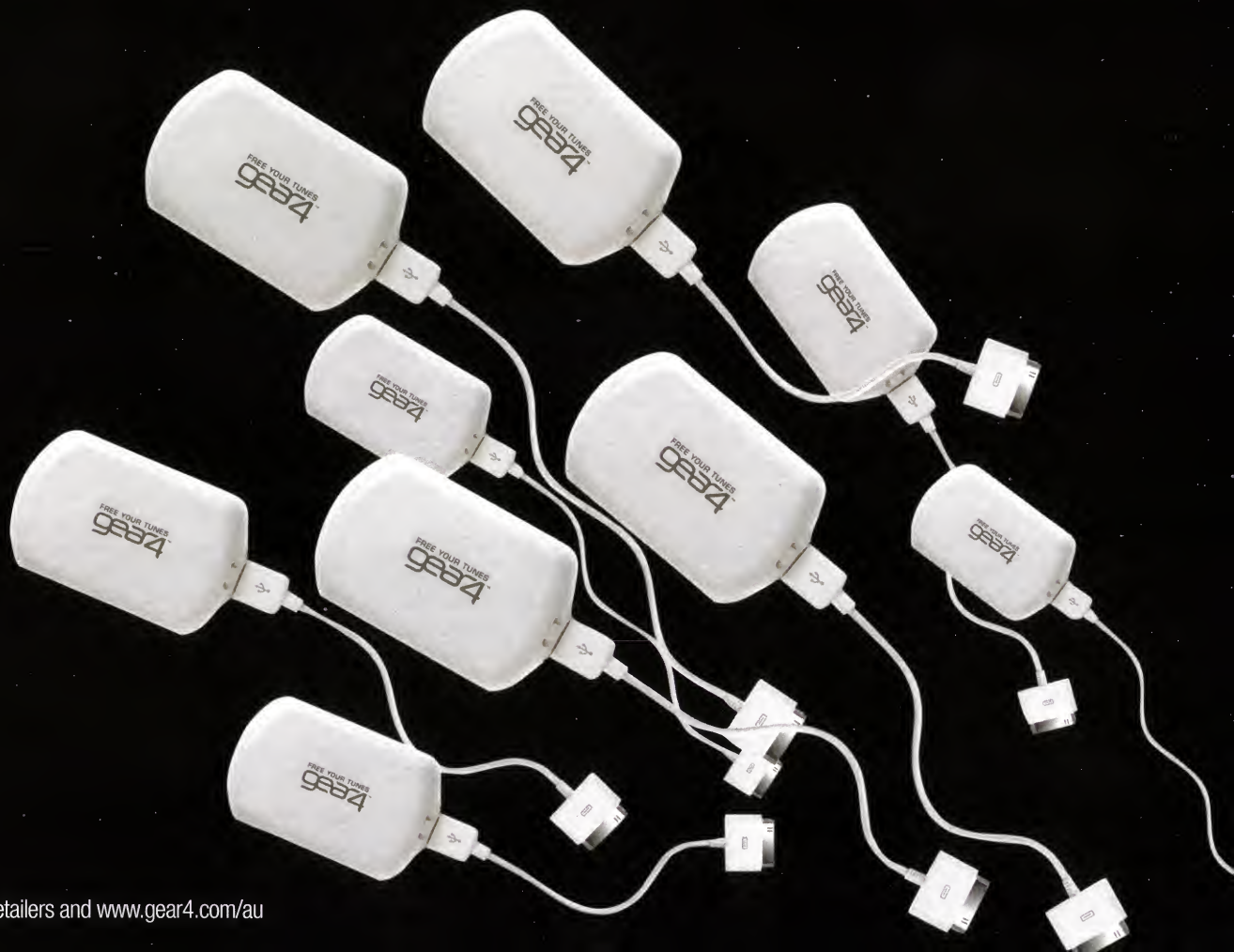


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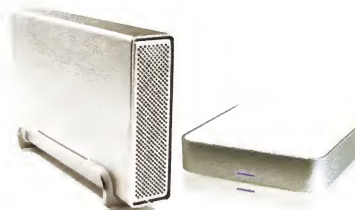
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Canon iPF9000 60" 12 Col...\$25850

Epson Large Format Printers

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Epson Photo R2400 A3 8 Col. \$1750

Epson Pro 4400 17" 4 Col.....\$2695

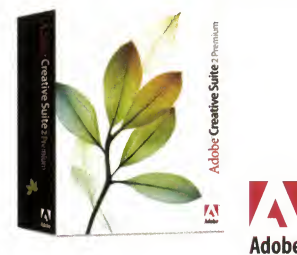
Epson Pro 4800 17" 8 Col.....\$2995

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6x8 USB Tablet\$479

9x12 USB Tablet\$619

Wacom Graphire 3

Entry level graphics, photo/video editing

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6x8 USB Tablet\$245

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Adobe Acrobat 7 Pro\$695

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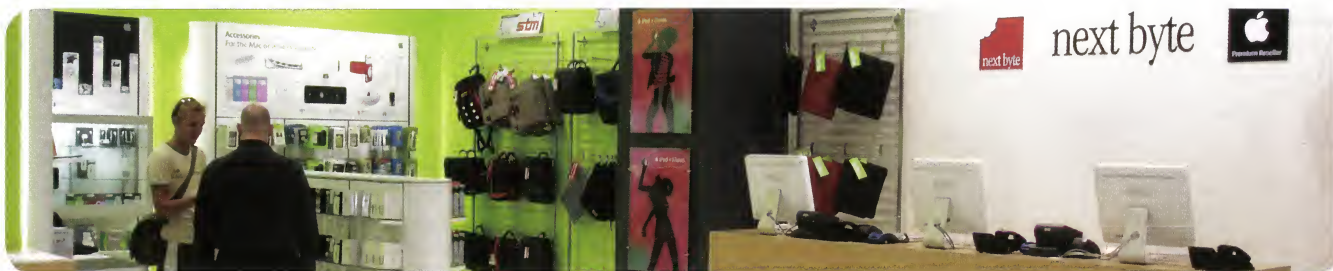
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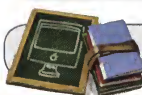
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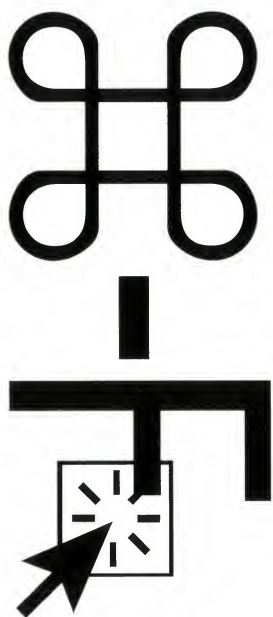
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Apple Reseller Of The Year 2006

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Focus. 050 Your Mac's secret's revealed!

By various authors

We all seek our own holy grail of computing — a feature or shortcut that would make our lives so much easier, if only we knew where to find it. Well, now you can stop the endless searching in menus, help folders, and web pages. Our band of intrepid explorers has discovered the best tips for everything from making your web surfing more efficient to bending Microsoft Word to your will.

The Hub.

Music. 035

Recording gear to suit any budget

Mobile. 040

Multimedia on a PDA, plus phancy phones from Nokia and Moto

Video. 043

Hands on with Matrox MXO, plus a first look at new Sony gear

Photo. 046

Pro File: photographer Dean Golja

How to.

Surf smarter 050

15 ways to find what you want online

Tame e-mail 052

15 ways to take control of your in-box and eliminate spam

Rule the office 054

15 ways to impress your colleagues

Get creative 056

14 ways to unleash your inner artist

Help folder 058

Queries and tips from our readers



Buzz.

iTunes at the movies 020

At a special event, Apple announced a completely revamped range of iPods, movies for sale through the renamed iTunes Store, and an upcoming device to stream media from your Mac to your TV. It's a lot to take in all at once. Also this issue: more on the battery recall(s) and the iMac gets the Core 2 Duo treatment.

Interface.

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Test drive.

Logitech Z-5450



Altec Lansing GT5051R



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AMW lab: 5.1-channel speaker systems



Sounds right

2.66GHz Mac Pro



068

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From the Macintosh scene to the magazine.

By Matthew JC. Powell.

**Hot Links**

www.apple.com/itunes
So much for them

US not us

I HATE to complain. You know me, I like to keep a positive outlook on things, and be grateful for the small blessings I do get rather than griping about what I don't.

I have no intention of using space in these pages to whinge that my long-awaited Merom-based MacBook Pro still hasn't eventuated even though the self-same chips are now being used in iMacs (aren't they called "Core 2 Duo Mobile," Steve? What part of "Mobile" do you think applies to an iMac?) — other people may do that, but not me. I'm just grateful that my five-year-old PowerBook still hasn't burst into flames. Touch wood.

And I have to say I'm grateful that Apple has heeded my advice (and thanks for the credit, Steve) and dropped the redundant and misleading word "Music" from the name of the iTunes Store. I'm still not overly enamoured of the word "iTunes," but it's a step in the right direction.

However, there is just this one little itty-bitty niggly-naggly teensy-weeny thing. Hardly worth bothering to mention really, but since you brought it up ...

When is Apple going to stop treating Australian customers like second-class citizens? Why are Australian iTunes customers still so far behind the US? They've got movies to download now — granted, all from one studio, but Disney has produced a reasonable flick or two in its time. We still don't have TV shows. The only short films we have are from Pixar.

At the big "Showtime" event in San Francisco, Jobs unveiled a bunch of new iPods and then showed off the new version of iTunes to take advantage of them. Some fabulous new capabilities in iTunes — great new interface, new searching techniques, download cover art of the Store for free, manage your iPod from one app not three, and others — but the key killer feature is that you can buy new-release movies for download the same day as the DVD becomes available.

And not a skerrick of it for Australia, nor anyone outside the US for that matter.

Jobs said in San Francisco that "we hope to take this international in 2007". OK, that's not too bad, I can wait until 2007, especially if it means we get TV shows too.

At a briefing in Sydney the same morning as the San Francisco event, an Apple rep was asked when we might see the movie download service in this hemisphere. "That announcement was just for the US, and we have nothing to say here" was the response.

Nothing to see here, go about your business, these aren't the droids you're looking for. He wouldn't even reiterate his boss's hope that it might be next year.

The chasm between the US and us was shown starkly in the press releases about the new iPod sent out on the day. Quoting from the US version of the release, Steve Jobs is purported to have said "The new iPod's brighter and more vibrant display and longer battery life make it perfect for watching Hollywood movies and TV shows right in the palm of your hand." The Australian version of the release, however, has him saying "The new iPod's brighter and more vibrant display and longer battery life make it perfect for watching music videos right in the palm of your hand."

That's right: according to Apple Australia, Jobs said nothing about Hollywood movies, nor TV shows. He reckons the whole point of adding the video capability to the iPod was so people could watch music videos. Well who wouldn't?

Well, me for one, but I'm a fuddy-duddy that way.

I can understand Apple wanting to take care of the US first. It's the biggest market and you go where the biggest money is. That's just capitalism and the time to complain about capitalism was well before now.

However, my confidence in the ability of the company to "take this international" has been a little shaken in recent times. It took Australians years to get the iTunes Music Store in the first place, and now a year after video first appeared on the US Store we might as well still keep the word "Music" in the title. Or maybe "iTunes Music and Pixar Store" — little clunky do you think?

And how are we going at taking iPhoto book printing international? Several local providers offer the service, but without the volume that Apple could direct to them their costs are astronomical and the books extraordinarily expensive — certainly not something you'd whip off as a keepsake of your holiday. This is a service offered in numerous countries around the world, but still not here. It's been years.

Enough complaining. My PowerBook still works and works well. I've had a play with the new iPod shuffle and iPod nano and they're terrific — the shuffle has to be seen to be believed, and the black aluminium nano is a thing of beauty.

I very much look forward to having a play with the new full-size iPod too — when it gets here. ☹

Matthew JC. Powell

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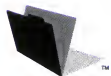
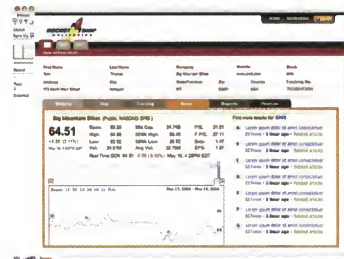
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Home of Snapz Pro



This issue Conexus (02 9975 2799) is giving a set of modaphones headphones valued at \$80 to the *Australian Macworld* reader who sends in what we deem to be the most interesting letter.

Revolutionary bass, high-fashion colors, and noise isolating technology combine to form sonic solitude and a fashion attitude. V-MODA's modern Bass Level Isolating Soft Silicon (BLISS) technology naturally reduces outside noise and enables unparalleled bass levels that can actually be felt.

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Assault on batteries

I called Apple in connection with the battery recall. I was told to take my battery to an Apple Reseller who would send it away and that I would get a replacement in four to eight weeks. You must be kidding! I have a PowerBook because I have the need to move my computer around. If I did not need to move it around, I would have purchased a desktop system. After an hour and a half on the phone I managed to get permission to get the replacement battery before I send the old one off.

This is a ridiculous situation. I would imagine there are thousands of people in the same situation as me who need to move their laptops around every day. Get your act together Apple, a simple exchange system at Apple resellers would be a simple fix to this problem.
Brendan Roome
Willoughby, NSW

See our story in Buzz this issue for more on the battery recall. — M.J.C.P.

Registration time. Little Snitch foils Snapz Pro's attempt to find out what time it is.



Terms and Conditions. Mentor letter of the month 1. Instructions on how to enter form part of these conditions of entry 2. To enter send tips or queries to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Mailbox". Entries will be judged by the editorial staff of *Australian Macworld*. The judges' decision in relation to any aspect of the competition is final and binding on every person who enters. No correspondence will be entered into. Chance plays no part in determining the winner(s). Each entry will be individually judged based on its degree of interest. 4. Employees, their immediate families and agencies associated with this competition are not permitted to enter. 5. The Promoter accepts no responsibility for late or misdirected entries. 6. The best entry/entries as determined by the judges will win the prize(s). 7. The Promoter is neither responsible nor liable for any change in the value of the prize occurring between the publish date and the date the prize(s) is claimed. 8. The prize(s) is not transferable and will not be exchanged for cash. 9. The winner(s) will be notified by mail. 10. All entries become the property of the Promoter. 11. The collection, use and disclosure of personal information provided in connection with this competition is governed by the Privacy Notice 12. The Promoter is Niche Media Pty Ltd of Level 3 / 165 Fitzroy Street ST KILDA VIC 3182 Ph 03 9525 5566, (ABN 13 064 613 529).

Letters should be e-mailed to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Mailbox" or by post to *Australian Macworld* Mailbox, 3/165 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, Victoria 3182. Letters of fewer than 200 words are given preference. We reserve the right to edit letters and probably will. To be eligible for the V-MODA prize, you must include your full name and address, including state or territory.

Taking stock of stock

In addition to the asset resources info ("Royalty-free treatment," The Hub. Video. AMW 08.2006), I wanted to let you in on two of the best photo-resource web sites for the hobbyist (and professional). Actually, I was surprised that they weren't mentioned, as they're quiet popular.

The best one (to my humble opinion) is iStockPhoto and a close second would be BigStockPhoto (see "Hot links" for both).

Photos supplied by just about everybody with a decent camera and an internet connection, and for sale for just a few dollar each.

Lucien
Caloundra, Qld

Thanks for letting us know your favourites stock sites, Lucien. We use iStockPhoto all the time in AMW. Unfortunately space didn't permit us to list every great stock image site out there in that article. — M.J.C.P.

Spy vs Spy

I thought you might be interested that my attempts to register Snapz Pro (see "Hot links") resulted in attempts by the software to contact two navy.mil sites as well as apple.com and columbia.edu.
Richard Seager
via internet

From what I can gather from your supplied images (see the screenshot

"Registration time"), the registration program is attempting to connect to network time protocol (ntp) servers at each of these domains. Why it would need to do this is anyone's guess (to keep track of when everyone registers I suppose), but I suspect it would only connect to one of them if you allowed it to, rather than blocking and making it try another. I can't think of anything untoward that could result from letting a program connect to an ntp server, but I'm prepared to be contradicted on that. — M.J.C.P.

Intel printing redux

I read with interest about printing on Intel Macs ("Intel printing", Mailbox 09.2006). I had a contrasting experience with a few-year-old Dymo printer I needed drivers for.

The Power Mac driver didn't work, so I searched the Dymo web site for an Intel driver for my printer. I contacted Dymo support for advice. Five minutes after logging a simple support request, I received a phone call from a Dymo tech. How's that for speedy service!

He pointed me towards their new Intel driver for all Dymo printers. Turns out they only publish the new Intel drivers with their new printers, even though the models are backwards compatible.

So, if you own a Dymo printer, and an Intel Mac, go straight to the Dymo LW 400 drivers.
Derek Yeoh-Ellerton
Perth, WA

See "Hot links" — M.J.C.P.

Unlike Arthur ("Intel printing", Mailbox 09.2006) I just had the most wonderful printer install experience. We just upgraded our Xerox Phaser 7700 to a 7750, did the install of the drivers on the PCs via the HTML interface on the printer, thought that was pretty neat.

Then went to the Macs and whoa, the printer is already there in the Bonjour section of the print dialogue box, no install required! Now that is neat.

Tony Gay
Digital Image
St Kilda, Vic.

I love it when stuff just works, don't you? — M.J.C.P.

What lack of support?

Reading AMW 07.2006, I came across a letter from Judith Sullivan in regards to Optus's advertising material and use of Apple hardware. I have read many times in previous editions of your magazine of Optus's apparent lack of support for the Mac platfor. I therefore find it strange that on Optus's web site it states in the System Requirements section that Macs using OS 9 or higher are supported. Even more intriguing is their support pages -- typing the word "mac" into the search field at the top of the OptusNet Broadband and Dial-up Help section reveals many articles on how to connect and troubleshoot their products with Macs.

Odd indeed.
George Haritonidis
via internet

On Optus's system requirements pages (it has a separate one for each of the services it offers) you will indeed find that Macs are supported for dial-up and cable customers. However, the services that are being promoted by the current advertising campaign – DSL and DSL Direct – do not list Macs as supported despite the prominent appearance of Mac hardware in the ads.

And yes, you will find Mac support for DSL if you search for "Mac" on the Help pages – but what good is that to a customer whose internet connection is down? The overwhelming feedback from Optus's customers, would-be customers and ex-customers among our readership is that phoning Optus and asking for DSL support for Mac is a dead end. The number of readers who write in or call saying that they have good experience with Optus DSL on their Macs is very close to nil. I realise that's not the best indication of overall service, but it's what we've got.

Full disclosure: I'm an Optus cable customer myself and have found the customer service mostly satisfactory — M.J.C.P.

.Gouge

In my opinion .Mac is just not worth paying \$140 every year.

I got into Macs after purchasing an iBook G4 to see what's so good about OS X. After playing around with the computer and researching what .Mac had to offer I decided to join up.

At first I was really impressed with the integration of iLife, Mail, Safari and iDisk but after a couple of years using it I just didn't see the point of renewing my membership.

With the free and well-priced services available out there like Google and Fastmail I find that .Mac is overpriced only to cater for people who are lazy, the less techy and Mac zealots who think having a @mac.com address is elite. Being able to sync to different platforms (phone, Mac and Windows) is far more convenient and advantageous in my position than the cost of Apple's under-service \$140 offering.

Ronald Corral
via internet

Thanks for that Ronald. You're right that an awful lot of what .Mac does can be provided more cheaply by alternative services, but there is also something to be said for having it all in one place. I don't know — I have to admit I rarely use my .Mac account for anything other than iChat, and I could do that without paying for it. I'd love to hear from any readers who have something positive to say about what .Mac provides. — M.J.C.P.

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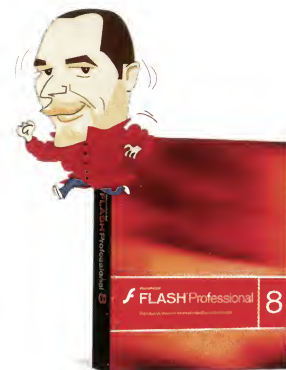
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New pods all round

IN mid-September Apple announced an update to its top-of-the-line iPod models, releasing two new models with brighter displays, enhanced battery life, new earbuds, and new software features, including games.

The full-sized iPods come in two versions. The \$380 model is equipped with a 30GB hard drive, and offers up to 14 hours of battery life for music playback or up to three and a half hours of video playback. The \$499 model has a 80GB hard drive – a new iPod size record – and offers up to 20 hours of music battery life or five and a half hours of video playback time.

“The most important feature we’re adding today is that we’re going to make the iPod more affordable and accessible,” said Jobs.

Both models feature screens that Apple claims are 60 percent brighter than previous fifth-generation iPod models, and come in either black or white. Unlike the previous 5G iPod’s 320x200 screen resolution, the new iPods can handle up to 640x400 (a difference which will, according to Apple, mainly be visible when playing files back on a TV set). And both models ship with Apple’s newly redesigned iPod earbuds. “We’ve been working on this for 18 months, studying a thousand ears, to find just the right headphones,” claimed Jobs.

The iPod’s software has also got an update. The iPod’s new search feature lets users use the scroll wheel to input letters for an instant live search of all the content on that iPod. The Quick Scroll feature displays a rectangular overlay of the letter

you’re currently scrolling through, if you’re scrolling quickly through an extremely long list of items.

As with iTunes 7 and the revised iPod nanos, these new iPods feature support gapless playback, allowing one track to flow seamlessly to the next without a pause in-between.



Another major new feature supported by these and all other fifth-generation iPods is Apple’s new collection of \$7.50 games, downloadable from the iTunes Store. The games available now are Bejeweled, Cubis 2, Mahjong, Mini Golf, Pac-Man, Tetris, Texas Hold’em, Vortex, and Zuma.

Of the new features in the revamped iPod, only the ability to buy and play games will be available as a software download to owners of older 5G iPods. The Quick Scroll and enhanced video resolution will require the purchase of a new iPod, according to Apple.

New nano tech. At the same event, Jobs unveiled a “completely remastered” version of the iPod nano, sporting a new case that comes in a variety of colours. The new iPod nano comes in three configurations, 2GB, 4GB, and 8GB, prices at \$219, \$299, and \$380 respectively. (The fact that an 8GB nano costs the same as a 30GB iPod reflects the fact that Apple sees the devices as appealing to entirely different customers.)

Apple abandoned the high-gloss case of its first generation of iPod nanos in favour of an aluminium enclosure reminiscent of the iPod mini that comes in several colours – blue, pink, green, silver and black. The 2GB nano comes in silver only, the 8GB model is only available in black, while the 4GB nano will be available in silver, pink, green and blue.

The second-generation model is smaller than the original and sports a brighter display. A Search and Quick Scroll feature (as in the full-size iPod) is designed to help find tracks quickly by entering letters with the scroll wheel. A gapless playback feature allows for listening to albums without breaks between songs.

No soft-shoe for shuffle. Given as much prominence as the revamped full-size iPod, Apple also unveiled new version of the company’s iPod shuffle, featuring a smaller enclosure and a new connection for charging and transferring music.

Apple is referring to the new shuffle as “the world’s smallest digital music player.” Half the size of its predecessor, the new iPod shuffle holds 1GB of music, and looks like a smaller version of the Apple Remote. The aluminium enclosure now sports a built-in clip to attach easily to clothing.

The headphone jack also serves as the connection to connect and charge the shuffle. Apple reports that the new shuffle will have up to 12 hours of battery life when fully charged.

The new iPod shuffle costs \$119, and will be available starting in October. • *Matthew Honan*

■ ONE LAST THING



Hot Links

www.apple.com/au/itunes
Get the new version of iTunes

Sneak peek at things to come

In a dramatic departure from Apple's traditional "no comment on unannounced product" approach, Steve Jobs has previewed a new device – code-named iTV – which will allow iTunes customers to view movies and TV shows on flat-screen televisions.

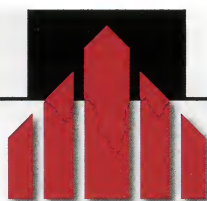
Jobs described the forthcoming \$US299 set-top box as "completing the package" of Apple's multimedia offerings. Users can download music, TV programs, and now movies from the iTunes Store (at least in the US). They can watch those multimedia files on both their Macs and iPods. However, there's no easy way of watching such programming on their television sets.

Resembling a squat Mac Mini, the iTV will use wireless networking to stream movies and TV shows from iTunes to a television. The power supply is built right in to the unit; it also features USB 2.0, Ethernet, High Definition Multimedia Interface (HDMI) plug, component video, analogue audio and optical audio interfaces.

The box is driven by software that carries a slight resemblance to Front Row, the multimedia control application Apple bundles with newer Macs.

In demonstrating iTV to the press at Apple's "Showtime" event, Jobs scrolled through menus for movies, TV shows, photos, and podcasts using an Apple remote. Floating artwork – movie posters for the Movie menu or album art for Music, for example – appears on the left-hand side of the screen while a list of titles appears on the right.

iTV – which Jobs stressed was an internal Apple code name and not the product's final moniker – won't ship until sometime during the first three months of 2007. • *By Mathew Honan and Peter Cohen*



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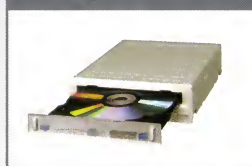
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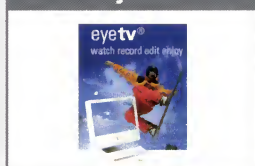
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Where to go if you have a MacBook Pro

Total recall

FOLLOWING hot on the heels (as it were) of Dell's announcement in August that it would be recalling some four million laptop batteries manufactured by Sony, Apple has announced a recall of batteries for PowerBook G4 12-inch and 15-inch models as well as 12-inch iBooks sold between October 2003 and August 2006. Apple wouldn't say how many customers in Australia might be affected by the program, but that 700,000 batteries outside the United States were being recalled.

Both the Dell and Apple batteries reportedly used the same manufacturing process, wherein the metal casing of the battery cell was crimped closed. In some cases (but not all) this crimping could allow shards of metal to break off and infiltrate the electrolytes at the heart of the battery. Then, under certain circumstances, these shards can cause a short circuit.

Under normal circumstances such a short circuit results in the battery simply switching off. However, Sony says that idiosyncratic power-management systems used by Dell (and presumably Apple) mean that the short circuits result in overheating an potential explosion.

Apple said that it had received only a few reports of overheating and "minor property damage" before initiating the recall, but reports have subsequently emerged of Apple laptops with sparks and smoke, similar to the stories of Dell explosions – if less dramatic.

Sadly the recall also became the subject of buck-passing between Apple and its resellers. In the US and Canada, users could order a replacement battery over the web and send their old one in after the new one arrived. In Australia and New Zealand, however, customers were required to turn their old batteries in at an authorised service centre and then wait for a replacement – that means anywhere from four to eight weeks. That's a long time for a portable computer to be tied to mains power.

An Apple spokesperson said this was the way resellers wanted to conduct the recall because they "didn't want to be chasing customers for their batteries", but several service centres contacted by AMW shifted the blame back to Apple, one saying "Apple wants to do this their way".

Given the negatives inherent in a product recall, you'd hope that Apple and its channel partners could at least try to make the experience as painless for customers as possible.

MacBooks not left out. Just in case users of Intel-based laptops were feeling a bit sidelined by all the fun their PowerPC-using road warrior mates were having, Apple has also initiated several exchange and repair programs for MacBooks and MacBook Pros.

In the case of the MacBook Pro, it's a matter of batteries manufactured between February and May of this year not performing to Apple's high standards. For MacBook users, there is a widely-reported issue with the machines randomly shutting down. Neither is a safety issue, and both seem more like teething problems with the new hardware than anything else.

If you have a MacBook Pro, check the web site (see "Hot links" to find out if you're eligible for a new battery. If you have a randomly-shutting-down MacBook, you know already that you want a fix, so take your machine to an authorised service centre. • *Matthew JC. Powell*

■ STORAGE



Hot Links

www.iomega-asia.com

iomega's web site

iomega's big Mac disk

• OMEGA has introduced the UltraMax 640GB desktop hard drive. Preformatted for Mac OS X, the drive uses two mechanisms striped together as a RAID 0 volume.

The UltraMax drive uses two 7200rpm Serial ATA (SATA) hard disk drive mechanisms. Users can control the RAID configuration using a manual RAID switch – so you can turn off the RAID all together and use the UltraMax as a JBOD (Just a Bunch of Disks) configuration.

The drive is sold pre-formatted as HFS+ for use on Mac OS X, but can be reformatted for NTFS use with Windows PCs, or can be set up for cross-platform use using an included utility.



The UltraMax is stackable and designed to complement Mac Pros and Power Mac G5s – it features a metallic grey exterior with mesh grill. It features FireWire 800, FireWire 400 and three USB 2.0 ports.

It's on sale now for \$699. • *Peter Cohen*

■ BRIEFS



Hot Links

www.lanier.com.au
 Colour, apparently, is contagious
www.khdist.com.au
 KH Distribution — now with Simms
www.freeverse.com
 Get Lineform

Lanier targets low-cost colour

LANIER has introduced the latest member of its colour laser printer family, with a focus on low-cost, high performance and security. Offering what Lanier claims are “the most attractive running costs on the market today”, the SP C410DN features long-yield consumables and built-in full duplexing. In addition the company claims the machine has a longer duty cycle, requiring less maintenance than similar printers. For companies and workgroups, the printer features sophisticated print-management and accounting software to ensure colour is used efficiently.

The SP C410DN is available now for \$1970 including duplexing, a 550-sheet paper tray, a bypass tray, network card, USB and 256MB of memory. Numerous options are available to tailor the device to your needs.

For further info contact Lanier on 1300 362 345. — *M.JC.P.*

KH acquired by Simms

BRISBAND-BASED KH Distribution, a major distributor in the Apple and Mac channel, has been acquired by Sydney-based Simms International, a specialist supplier of IT components and accessories. Simms is best known as master distributor for Kensington products in Australia, while KH has a broad stable including El Gato and Bose. Established ten years ago, KH has grown rapidly (especially on the back of the iPod) and product marketing manager Adam Rice told *AMW* that it is now “the largest distributor for Apple Computer”. — *M.JC.P.*

Freeverse goes into the drawing business

FREEVERSE Software has announced the preview release of Lineform, a vector drawing application for Mac OS X. You can download it now (see “Hot links”) and produce watermark-free images until 7 October, 2006. Tools supported by Lineform include Bezier editing, freeflow text, gradients, CMYK preview, boolean operations, expert typesetting, SVG format support, arrows, outline, free transform and more.

Although the software is expected to be distributed by Try and Byte, which handles most of Freeverse’s titles in Australia, local pricing was not available at press time. Contact Try and Byte on 02 9906 5227. — *Peter Cohen*


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Sydney - 26 October 2006

Auckland - 2 November 2006

Space is limited for this free event.

Register at www.apple.com.au/seminars/sonytour/



■ PHOTOGRAPHY



Hot Links

www.canon.com.au
Home of EOS and Powershot

Canon targets the in-betweeners

CANON has announced a range of new cameras about to hit the market, including two that straddle the border between compact and digital SLR.

Improving on last year's successful EOS 350D entry-level digital SLR, the EOS 400D offers ten-megapixel resolution and a vastly improved user interface, as well as an automatic sensor-cleaning system to ensure dust-free shots. The camera can take three full-resolution pictures per second for 27 consecutive frames, thanks to the D!gicII image processor. That means it's easier than ever before to freeze action exactly where you want it.

Targeted at customers who wish to move up from compact cameras, the 400D offers a new easier-to read and use menu system accessed through the large 2.5-inch LCD display. Where the 350D had a separate panel for adjusting settings such as aperture, shutter speed, white balance and ISO speed, all of these functions are now accessed at the push of a button on the main screen itself. If you don't want to do things manually, the camera also offers a full range of shooting modes and automatic settings.

Another improvement over the 400D's predecessors is the addition of Picture Style settings, which adjust the shots

in the camera's internal software to suit different shooting situations. Styles include "portrait," which produces more natural skin tones, "landscape" for punchier blues and greens, as well as "neutral," "faithful" and "monochrome".

Anyone who has ever used a digital SLR will tell you that dust entering the camera when changing lenses is an unavoidable annoyance. What's more it's difficult to clean and, in sufficient quantity, severely diminishes the quality of your shots. The EOS 400D includes a tiny motor which shakes dust from the sensor at startup and shutdown (as well as being user-configurable). Software provided with the camera also enables to you remove dust spots that do make it on to your shots.

Naturally it is compatible with a full range of Canon lenses and accessories including the EF and EF-S lenses and Speedlight flash units.

Coming back the other way. Canon has also announced a high-end compact camera to suit pros who want something lighter than a dSLR to carry around, or just shutterbugs who want high quality pictures, but don't want to worry about changing lenses.

The Powershot G7 provides ten-megapixel resolution in a compact form factor. Looking slightly retro at first glance, it proves to be anything but in use.

Featuring Canon's latest D!gicIII image processor (a step up from the EOS400D in that respect), the G7's auto-focus system has the ability to detect and track human faces in a shot, to ensure that the subject of your photo is correctly highlighted (naturally this is optional for artistic types). The camera also features a revolutionary (excuse the pun) clickwheel interface, allowing users to switch between shooting modes and settings amazingly quickly. You simply turn the wheel to bring up an on-screen menu, find the function you want, and let go — no need for additional button-pushing.

The EOS400D is available now for \$1499, and the Powershot G7 will be available in October for \$899. For more info on both of these cameras check Canon's web site or call 1800 021 167.



■ USERS AND GROUPS

**Hot Links**

matthew.powell@niche.com.au

Got a group you want listed? Drop a line

**Mac user group meetings for October
(contact groups for more details).**

Mon 2
Gold Coast Macintosh User
Group
www.goldcoastmacusers.org.au/

Tue 3
WAMUG [WA]

www.wamug.org.au

MacTalk — Newcastle & The
Hunter Macintosh User Group
[NSW]

[groups.yahoo.com/group/
MacTalk](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MacTalk)

Wed 4
Coffs Harbour Apple Macintosh
Users Group [NSW]

[groups.yahoo.com/group/
coffs_mac_users](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/coffs_mac_users)

ClubMac [NSW]

www.clubmac.org.au

Toowoomba Apple & Mac UG
[QLD]

www.taamug.org.au

Thu 5
TASMAC [TAS]
[groups.yahoo.com/group/
tasmug](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tasmug)

Fri 6
SAAUC [SA]

www.saauc.org.au

Southern Highlands Mac Users
Group [NSW]

www.shcug.org.au

Sat 7
Apple Users Society of
Melbourne (AUSOM) [VIC]

[www.ausom.net.au/
nextmeeting.html](http://www.ausom.net.au/nextmeeting.html)

Sun 8
Gold Coast Apple Users Group
[QLD]

[home.worldlink.com.au/
appleserv/GCUsers.html](http://home.worldlink.com.au/appleserv/GCUsers.html)

Mon 9

Sydney Apple Macintosh Users
Group [NSW]

homepage.mac.com/sydamug

North Queensland Macintosh
Users Group [QLD]

www.nqmug.org

Tue 10

Macintosh Multimedia Group
[VIC]

[www.ausom.net.au/
multimedia.html](http://www.ausom.net.au/multimedia.html)

www.imug.com.au

Macintosh Users Group
Sunshine Coast [QLD]

www.mugsunco.org.au

ACTApple [ACT]

[www.actapple.org.au/Pages/
Meetings/Meetings.html](http://www.actapple.org.au/Pages/Meetings/Meetings.html)

Wed 11

ClubMac [NSW]

www.clubmac.org.au

Retiree & Others [VIC]

www.ausom.net.au/retiree.html

Bellarine Mac Users [VIC]

Digital Pictures and the Mac

www.bellarinemac.org.au

SAAUC [SA]

www.saauc.org.au

Sat 14

Apple Users Society of
Melbourne [VIC]

[www.ausom.net.au/
macmarket.html](http://www.ausom.net.au/macmarket.html)

Sun 15

Apple-Q [QLD]

www.apple-q.org.au

Tue 17

Sydney Macintosh Users Group
[NSW]

www.sydney.macusersgroup.org

Sat 21

SAAUC [SA]

www.saauc.org.au

Sun 22

Apple-Q [QLD]

www.apple-q.org.au

Tue 24

ACTApple [ACT]

[www.actapple.org.au/Pages/
Meetings/Meetings.html](http://www.actapple.org.au/Pages/Meetings/Meetings.html)

iMug

www.imug.com.au

Wed 25

BEAUT [VIC]

www.beaut.org.au

Thu 26

Central Victorian Mac Users
[VIC]

www.cvmu.net

Sat 28

GMUG [WA]

gmug.wamug.org.au



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Email: sales@smartproducts.com.au

SII

Seiko Instruments USA Inc.



■ HARDWARE



Hot Links

www.apple.com/au/imac
Merom on the range

iMacs get bigger ...

APPLÉ updated its entire iMac product line in early September, adding the Core 2 Duo Intel processor. In addition to the updated processors, Apple launched a new model that features a 24-inch widescreen display.

"We think this [24-inch iMac] is a product that both consumers and professionals are going to love," said David Moody, Apple's vice president of Worldwide Mac Product Marketing.

The new iMac lineup includes four models: a 1.83GHz and a 2.0GHz 17-inch, a 2.16GHz 20-inch and the all-new 2.16GHz 24-inch iMac. According to Apple, the new iMac delivers 50 percent better performance than the previous iMac (see our benchmarks below).

The 24-inch iMac features a 24-inch widescreen LCD display with a 1920x1200 pixel resolution that offers 30 percent more screen real estate than the 20-inch model. In addition to the new processor, the 24-inch iMac also includes 4MB of shared L2 cache,

1GB of 667MHz DDR2 SDRAM memory, a 250GB Serial ATA hard drive, NVIDIA GeForce 7300 GT graphics with 128MB of GDDR3 memory and a SuperDrive.

There is growing demand in the industry for a powerful machine like the 24-inch iMac. With additional features like FireWire 800, the high-end iMac seems an ideal computer for what has been referred to as the prosumer customer. "There is a market out there for consumers that aspire to do professional-level work, or for a pro that doesn't need the expandability of the Mac Pro — this is a perfect computer for them," said Moody.

Built to order options are also available for the 24-inch model. The new iMac can be configured with a 2.33GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor, up to 3GB of 667MHz DDR2 SDRAM memory, a 500GB Serial ATA hard drive and the NVIDIA GeForce 7600 GT with 256MB of GDDR3 memory.

With its new Intel processors, Apple has taken on the low-cost PCs head-on. One of the criticisms that has long plagued the company is that its products are more expensive than comparable Windows-based systems, but those arguments have largely been disproved. "What we want to do is deliver outstanding value, great design and great features. We look at it as a total package," said Moody.

The 24-inch 2.16GHz iMac (\$2999), 20-inch 2.16GHz iMac (\$2299), 17-inch 2.0GHz iMac (\$1849) and the 17-inch 1.83GHz iMac (\$1549) are all available immediately. • *Jim Dalrymple*

... and faster

WHEN unveiling the Core 2 Duo processor in July, Intel CEO Paul Otellini said that the next-generation Core Duo chip would deliver a 20 percent increase in laptop performance. Apple's newly unveiled iMacs — which use the mobile version of the Core 2 Duo touted by Otellini — don't quite approach that performance gain.

To date, we have received two of these all-in-one systems: the 17-inch 2GHz model and the 2.16GHz 20-inch offering. We're expecting the new 24-inch and 1.83GHz 17-inch models soon.

With very similar processor clock speeds as well as identical graphics, RAM, and bus speeds specifications as the Core Duo iMacs released back in January, you may not anticipate much of a performance difference — you'd be wrong. The improvements

the Core 2 Duo chip brings to the new iMacs include 4MB of shared L2 cache — twice that of its predecessors. The new chip also delivers improvements in efficiency and performance when executing instructions.

The 2.16GHz system narrowed the performance gap between iMac and Mac Pro product lines. With twice the number of processor cores, all running faster than the iMac, the Mac Pro had a definite advantage in this match up. Because not all applications and tasks take full advantage of the Mac multi-processing capabilities, most results showed the Mac Pro between 20 and 30 percent faster than the 2.16GHz iMac. I expect that test results of the new 24-inch model — with its faster graphics and the optional 2.33GHz processor upgrade — could close this performance gap even further. Look for a full review next issue. • *James Galbraith*

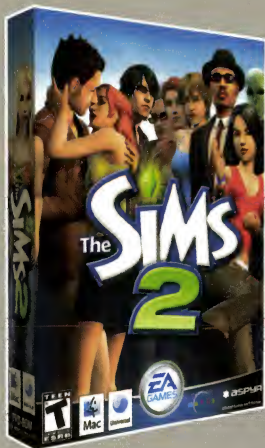
Core 2 Duo iMac benchmarks

	Speedmark 4.5 OVERALL SCORE	Adobe Photoshop CS2 SUITE	Cinema 4D XL 9.5.21 RENDER	Compressor 2.1 MPEG2 Encode	iMovie 6.0.1 AGED EFFECT	iTunes 6.0.4 MP3 ENCODE	Unreal Tournament 2004 FRAME RATE	Finder ZIP ARCHIVE
17-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2GHz	232	2:04	1:06	2:50	0:57	1:03	65.5	2:34
20-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2.16GHz	245	1:55	1:01	2:37	0:52	1:03	74.4	2:22
20-inch iMac Core Duo/2GHz	210	2:31	1:11	3:21	1:03	1:26	54.1	2:34
Mac Pro 2.66GHz (Standard)	299	1:25	0:28	1:47	0:38	0:48	91.3	2:01
	> Better	< Better	< Better	< Better	< Better	< Better	> Better	< Better

Best results in **bold**. Reference system in *italics*.

Speedmark 4.5 scores are relative to those of a 1.25GHz Mac mini, which is assigned a score of 100. Adobe Photoshop, Cinema 4D XL, iMovie, iTunes, and Finder scores are in minutes:seconds. All systems were running Mac OS X 10.4.7 with 1GB of RAM, with processor performance set to Highest in the Energy Saver preference pane when applicable. The Photoshop Suite test is a set of 14 scripted tasks using a 50MB file. Photoshop's memory was set to 70 percent and History was set to Minimum. We recorded how long it took to render a scene in Cinema 4D XL. We used Compressor to encode a 6minute:26second DV file using the DVD: Fastest Encode 120 minutes - 4:3 setting. In iMovie, we applied the Aged video effect to a 1-minute movie. We converted 45 minutes of AAC audio files to MP3 using iTunes' High Quality setting. We used Unreal Tournament 2004's Antalus Botmatch average-frames-per-second score; we tested at a resolution of 1,024 by 768 pixels at the Maximum setting with both audio and graphics enabled. We created a Zip archive in the Finder from a 1GB folder. — Macworld Lab testing by James Galbraith and Jerry Jung

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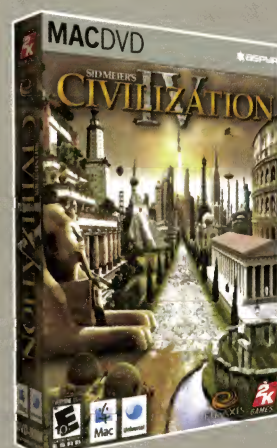
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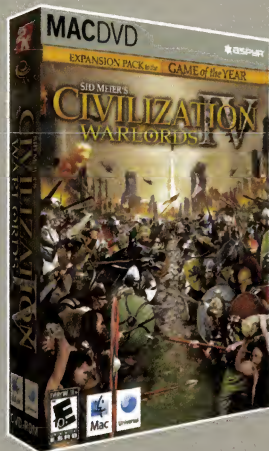
Create Your Own Businesses!



Civilization IV

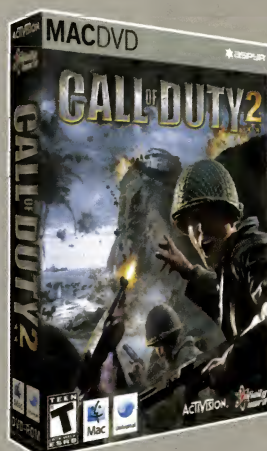
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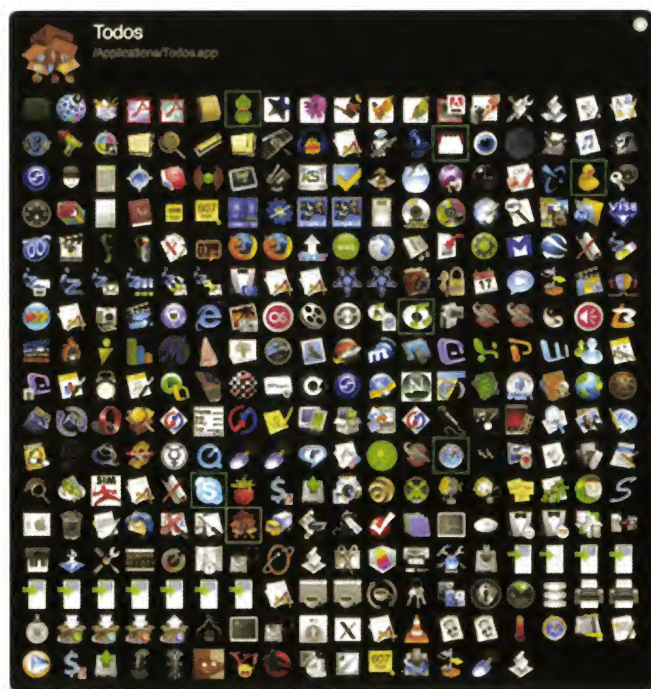
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The dock can't fit all your icons; Todos was created to fill the gap. Hit a hot key and it instantly displays all your application icons in one window (it prescans the icons at startup so there's no delay).

Tired of Microsoft Excel's 1990s feature set? Tables is a new all-Cocoa application that can read Excel or OpenDocument file formats and adds some unique features like the ability to place images (including PDFs) in spreadsheets.

Skype for Mac can now do video calling. This really gives Apple iChat a run for its money, given Skype video calls can be made to Windows users too. It's still in beta testing and Skype is working on improving video quality, but at least it navigates through firewalls without manual configuration, unlike iChat.

Like iPhoto for PDFs. Organise PDFs easily by tag, folder or by thumbnail visually. One handy feature: a visual loupe that lets you instantly see a close-up of a PDF page just by hovering over the thumbnail.

Set a reminder for yourself (or your beloved) in your own voice! Run the app, hit a key command to trigger recording, and set a time/date for playback. You can also apply a voice filter like Darth Vader or chipmunk.

Here's the solution to those boring hours of internet-disconnectedness on aircraft: SiteSucker can save entire websites to disk for reading offline. You can set it to only go a limited number of links deep so it doesn't take forever on big sites.

Hopefully this will be made obsolete very soon when Google releases the long-awaited Gdrive for online file storage. In the meantime, Gdisk can use a Gmail account as a file system for storage of files. It doesn't appear as a mounted drive like iDisk unfortunately, but then, it is free.

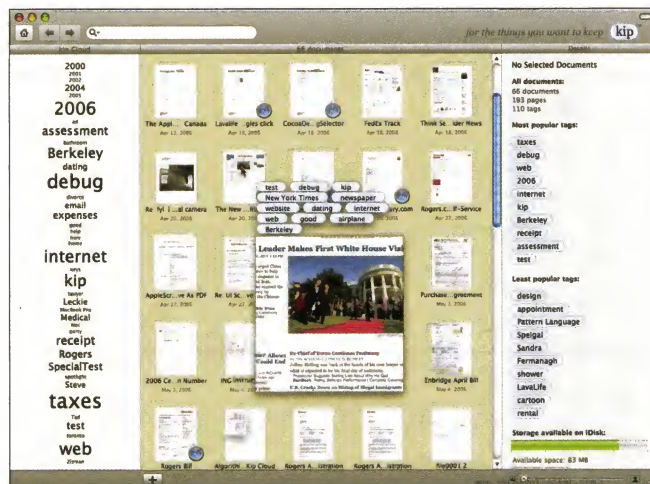
A screen recorder that works on Intel Macs. Capture what you do on-screen to video and save into any format supported by QuickTime.

Super-easy program to stitch together multiple photos into panoramas.

Free Australian TV guide for the OS X Dashboard. If you previously downloaded it and it stopped working, grab this version, as it corrects some bugs that caused the widget to break.

If you own an HP Printer/Scanner/Copier "PSC" series printer, you need to get these new drivers. They correct the long standing problem of gradually increasing CPU usage until eventual system hang if the printer is disconnected. Search HP.com to download the appropriate driver for your printer (but look for version 7.9).

If you used BootCamp 1.0 to install XP on your Intel Mac, make sure you get this update. It adds Windows support for the iSight and inbuilt microphone if your Mac has one, as well as better support for Apple keyboards in Windows.



New Products from Try & Byte

iSkin ProTouch for MacBook / MacBook Pro

\$54.95

Stops just about anything you throw at it!

Non-obstructive typing

ProTouch is made from flexible yet durable high-grade silicone that conforms to the contours of each key.

Easy to use and remove

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Use your Agent18 with the iPod hifi or any other device that is compatible with the universal dock.



Other Products

Kensington Microsaver DS



Kensington's safest notebook lock ever! - **\$105**

Britannica 2007 Range



The world's most popular encyclopedia range - **\$Call**

Kid Pix Deluxe 3x



Full iLife 06 integration and podcasting - **\$59.95**

The Print Shop 2.0



Best of Show Winner Macworld 2005 - **\$89.95**

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The view from the other side of the counter.

By Fleur Doidge.

By any other name

IN the second instalment in the category of "I told you so", at the time of writing I had just discovered that Apple does in fact plan to end the AppleCentre brand for its authorised resellers. In normal circumstances, I'd have to be disappointed by this, but, like anybody, I just love it when I'm right.

"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Shakespeare wasn't kidding, but that delightful little phrase doesn't tell the whole story either: the rose may still smell as sweet but, human perception being what it is, we may not perceive the perfume quite the same way if it was called, say, a cauliflower. Marketing and advertising people, much as I might hate to admit it, understand the truth of this.

What happens now is that Apple resellers the world over will have to give up a large amount of collateral associated with the AppleCentre brand — some of it very good, powerful materials that have partially (in some cases, maybe, totally) carried some of the less innovative resellers through the last decade or so.

Imagine if you had to start work tomorrow under another name. Sure, there are plenty of connections to your old life and the people who knew you under your old name, but it's amazing how much weight a simple collection of letters can carry in the world at large.

Your name is your brand, even if you're not a Hollywood star. Your name is a kind of shorthand that allows others to seek you out for specific purposes. So if you change your name, you risk losing a lot of connections — some foreseen and preventable, others impossible to predict.

Your best friend, your boss or your boyfriend might be able to track you down. Those people are likely to be notified by you of such a change in a timely manner. What about your doctor, the organisers of a competition you entered last year, your accountant or some future potential employer whose research of your records is all based on your old (or your new) name. What about the love of your life, with whom lost touch after that earthquake one day trekking in Nepal?

You could miss out on some really good stuff that way. And it's not entirely possible to prevent similar consequences when you make such changes.

Company branding, unsurprisingly, operates the same way. When you're seeking a new business to deal with, to offer some of your hard-earned for goods and services, you rely less on direct contacts much of the time than on indirect research via third-party resources such as



Hot Links

www.itnews.com.au/newsstory.aspx?ClaNID=35480

Apple cans AppleCentre branding

www.william-shakespeare.info/quotes-quotations-play-romeo-andjuliet.htm

Quotes from Romeo and Juliet

the web or ye olde school Yellow Pages. When your fingers do the walking, it is words that control your final decisions and actions.

A forced name change may cut each reseller off not just from the support network of branding and associated resources, but from quite a few past and future customers. Now, that could mean more than just ephemeral disappointment. That could seriously threaten anyone's business.

Apple has moved to say that it will not abandon its resellers. However, it's not clear if all Australian resellers are convinced by their vendor's protestations. Resellers remember that any public statement is only for the nonce and could be changed.

Many recall Apple claiming it would stand behind the AppleCentre brand all the way. As recently as August 2005, Apple Australia marketing manager Rob Small flatly denied, in an interview with this writer, that the vendor was planning to kill off the AppleCentre brand.

That's despite the fact reseller rumours that Apple was ending the brand have been flying thick and fast since May 2005 at least.

Only a fool would insist any large company or anyone else must always stick by promises made under different circumstances years or even decades ago. And only total idiots would not protect themselves against future possible changes in direction.

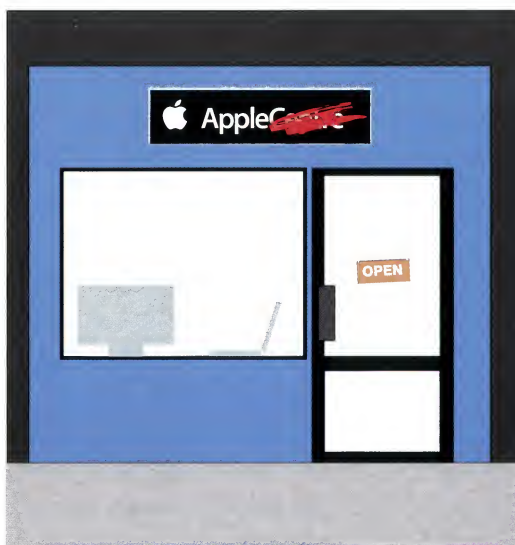
Some resellers have done just that. AppleCentre Taylor Square in Sydney has been manoeuvring itself slowly but

surely into a different position of strength for the last couple of years, edging gradually away from its reliance on the brand as it did so. As has the Adelaide-based Next Byte chain of Apple stores.

For the latter, the move has doubtless been easier. Next Byte is a nationally-known chain with many stores that has worked hard for years to build up its own, independent brand. What of the smaller stores and operators? There are many more of those out there in Australia, and they have far less room to move.

I'm not a businessperson, but I've spent quite a few years now writing about them, their trials, tribulations and successes. Your columnist has only one thing to suggest: smart former AppleCentres are going to go for the customer service and support jugular. Not just because it might work, but because they have little option. ☞

Fleur Doidge is a longtime observer of the Mac reseller channel in Australia.



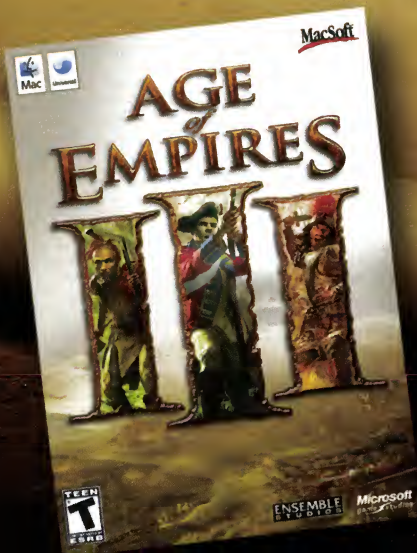


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Blow up your video

THE power of the motion picture has defined many moments in recent history: a patriot missile precisely turning a corner around a building during Gulf War I; Rodney King copping a beating on the side of a Los Angeles highway; a 767-222 crashing into the twin towers of the World Trade Center.

Where these moments made their mark on the world via CNN, the internet is starting to become the broadcast medium of choice for videos that wouldn't necessarily rate a blip on the CNN scale, but are nonetheless capable of creating significant ripples in the world.

Dell executives really felt the power of pictures when a video emerged online of one of the company's laptops exploding in flame in a conference room in Osaka. Ultimately, Dell was forced to recall 4.1 million batteries worldwide. It said this action, which was estimated to have cost up to \$A600 million and came weeks after the videos spread like wildfire across the internet, wasn't prompted by anything in particular apart from its long-term monitoring of product safety.

Like Dell's laptops, online video is exploding in a way nobody anticipated: seemingly overnight it has gone from near irrelevance to a completely mainstream craze.

Improving online video on Mac. Unfortunately, making the most of online video isn't completely straightforward. Online video sites only want you to watch their videos online. They don't want you to save them to your hard disk, or play them on your fifth-generation iPod.

Here are some tips for improving your online video experience:

- Microsoft has given up on the development of its woeful Windows Media Player for Mac and instead sponsored the distribution of some existing third party software that makes Windows Media playback on Mac possible. Flip4Mac Windows Media QuickTime Components are a free download and make it possible to play Windows Media Video in QuickTime and web browsers. It still doesn't support DRM-protected files but it's at least a step in the right direction.

- PodTube 1.0 allows you to save videos from the leading online video service YouTube.com and then convert them for playback on your iPod. One click is all that's needed to save the video, convert for iPod and add it to your iTunes library.

- iGetMovies 2.2 lets you save any QuickTime movie you play in a



Hot Links

www.flip4mac.com/wmv_download.htm
Windows Media components

www.youtube.com

Youtube

djodjodesign.free.fr/files/PodTube.zip

PodTube


djodjodesign.free.fr/files/iGetMovies.zip

iGetMovies

www.divx.com/divx/mac/

Divx Codec for Mac

- If sound is missing on your online videos, the most likely reason is that the popular freeware audio editing app Audacity has mucked around with OS X's audio settings, which in turn stopping the Flash 9 browser plugin from working. To remedy the problem, go to Applications > Utilities > Audio Midi Setup. In the "Audio Devices" tab, pull down the "Properties for" dropdown and select "Built in Output". If the "format" is 96000.0Hz, change it back to 44100.0Hz. You'll need to do this after each time you use Audacity.

- Although generally used for pirated videos which are downloaded before being played, the Divx codec is occasionally also needed to play some videos online. It's a free download and once installed, you can play Divx movies in web browsers or in QuickTime directly. 

Mac-native Exchange client in sight

I've bemoaned the lack of a Mac-native equivalent to Microsoft Outlook before in this column as being one of the biggest blockers preventing use of Macs in corporate environments.

After that article, reader Jin Kee contacted me to point out that OS X builds of the open source Exchange-client Ximian Evolution were indeed available, and had been for some time. I checked them out and found that while Jin was right, there were no remotely recent versions available, or ones with Exchange connectivity.

However my research did cause me to stumble upon an interesting thing: the blog of an engineer working for Novell who has been working on compiling the latest release of Ximian Evolution for Mac, along with full Exchange connectivity.

I would have loved to review it for this edition of AMW but the build released just before press time didn't run correctly on the Macs I had available to me for testing. Despite enlisting the help of a UNIX-savvy colleague, we were unable to get it running (the current built has to be started via the command line). However, I expect that by next edition I'll have more news.



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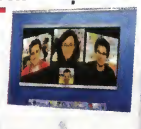
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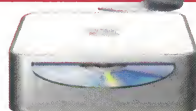
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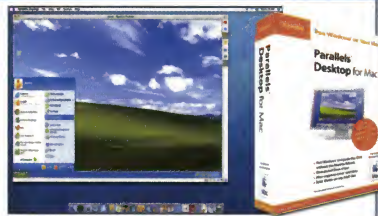
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The Big Blue Lounge
acapella.harmony-central.com
Phil O'Keefe's forum is recommended

Setting up a recording studio at home

CREATING and recording music at home has never been more accessible. If you've been using GarageBand to make music for a while and feel the need to take the next step or just want to jump in boots and all for the first time, setting up a studio can be a lot of fun. Setting it up can sound more daunting than it actually is. You don't need a lot of room or even your own room to do it. The growth in home-based music production means there's a huge choice of brands across all product lines, so each of the recommendations below are purely representative of the price range they fall into and are well-established competitors in their niche.

First, some traps to avoid.

A case of GAS. A well-known term for those who buy music gear regularly is GAS — Gear Acquisition Syndrome. It tends to be at its worst when you first set up a studio or if you haven't added something to your studio for a while. Suddenly you see a new piece of gear has been released and you just know you have to buy it, somehow. It's not dissimilar to those Mac-lovers who count down for new models to be released. As amusing as it sounds, there is one major downside to GAS: it can be a major impediment to your creativity. It's not difficult to spend time reserved for actually creating music on buying or trying more gear that you may not actually need.

False economies. When putting together your shopping list on a tight budget, it can be tempting to buy a large number of items from different manufacturers, each offering the cheapest option in their area. This can work, but only if you've done excellent

research and know that everything is compatible. Sometimes, buying a bundle can actually make good sense. A lot of audio interfaces, for example, now throw in "lite" versions of recording software and plugins, usually more than enough to get making music. M-Audio and Digidesign live and breath the bundle philosophy and it does have its advantages.

The gear you need. It's a common myth that you need the latest and greatest hardware to record audio. GarageBand shows the lie in the myth through its feature set that doesn't require super-fast processors. I know of a number of musicians living off their work full-time who still use G4 Macs running OS 9. Although configuring audio on OS 9 takes a little longer, it's not difficult and once done delivers exactly the same results.

Given that you don't need to go buy a new Mac, here's the rest of the kit you'll need to go beyond GarageBand.

Your audio interface. if you're going to base your studio around a Mac with OS X Jaguar or above, then you're half way there

with OS X's CoreAudio architecture. You may not even need an audio interface if you're going to go fully virtual (you don't sing or need to record yourself playing a non-digital instrument).

If you are going to need to get analogue audio into your Mac, then the specifications of your audio interface are going to depend on what you're going to use it for. For most home studios, being able to record one track at a time is enough. If you're part of a band that likes recording together, then you may need a more fully-featured interface. USB 2.0 or Firewire 400/800 doesn't really matter unless you want to work at the higher end of the spectrum. If you are going to be recording both vocals and instruments then ensure the interface has both line and instrument inputs. Even the cheapest interfaces operate at 16-bit/44.1kHz level, which is CD quality — if you can get higher-rated devices within your budget it's nice to have, but for most people CD-quality is more than adequate.

In your face. The RME Fireface 800 is a serious audio interface for serious musos.





Get the sound. A good set of monitor speakers is an essential to any studio.

Budget: M-Audio Audiophile USB (\$349; PowerMove, 03 9464 4999 or Electric Factory, 03 9480 5988).

High-end: RME Fireface 800 (\$2999; Innovative Music Australia, 03 9540 0658).

Your recording software. The range of software available is nothing short of mind-boggling. For the sake of simplicity we'll assume you want software that can deal with both Audio and MIDI data. The traditional big guns are Logic (Logic Pro or Logic Express), Cubase (SX3/SL3/SE3), Pro Tools (LE or HD) and Digital Performer. In recent years Ableton Live has gained a lot of popularity as well.

It's hard to go past the Logic suite, particularly if you're now familiar with GarageBand — there are similarities between the two. Both Logic Express and Logic Pro can utilise any GarageBand Jam Packs you may have purchased and the integration with other Pro applications like Final Cut is something the competitors can't match. If you can, spend half a day at a music store and ask for a demo of each of the big guns (Ableton Live is the only one with a demonstration version available for download — see "Hot links").

A final crucial point — each piece of software has very specific hardware requirements. Pro applications can become incapacitated if you upgrade your system software or your Mac is starting to show its age, so be cautious.

Budget: Logic Express (\$449; Apple Australia 133 622).

High-end: Pro Tools LE (\$4390 including Digi 002 Factory interface; Avid Australia 02 8977 4800).

Your plugins. All of the major software suites come with standard plugins and

these will cover the basics. However, once you've created a few songs you'll start to want other audio tweaking options. You can divide plugins into two broad groups: virtual instruments and effects. If you've used GarageBand you'll have used plugins from both groups.

The bad news is that there are a number of competing plugin formats, thanks to each of the major recording having its own proprietary architecture. With the advent of OS X, the Audio Unit format (used in GarageBand, Logic Express and Logic Pro amongst others) was added to veteran formats such as RTAS (Pro Tools) and VST (Cubase). The good news is that most third-party plugin manufacturers release their products in a way that there are versions for all formats on the same disk or download. Some of the more popular plugins are pitch and time shifting, virtual pianos/organs/guitar amplifiers/drum sets and software synthesisers.

A few plugins that are hard to live without would include:

Serato Pitch 'n Time LE. Extremely easy pitch-shifting and time correction. Works with both Logic Pro 7.2 and Pro Tools 6 and 7. Free demo available from Serato's web site (see "Hot links"). Price is \$599 from distributor Sound Devices 02 9283 2077.

iDrum. A standalone and plugin drum machine in one. Intuitive interface, compatibility with Logic, Pro Tools and any Audio Unit-compatible application. Able to be purchased online for \$US69.99 and a demo version is available.

Absynth 3. A veteran software synth, compatible with pretty much every application and has a large user base. Demo version available with the full version costing \$599. Buy online or Australian distributor is Major Music, 1300 306 670.

Your monitor speakers. If you are going to spend any amount of time making music, you'll need monitor speakers. These will be the heart of your studio as it's the only piece of gear you rely on for the whole recording process. You cannot rely on headphones as your sole monitoring option — headphones are great for laying down tracks but far from ideal when actually mixing and mastering the finished product. Your ears get fatigued when listening closely for extended periods of time, and

this is accentuated when using headphones all the time.

Whichever speakers you do decide to buy, you'll need to get your ears used to their output. The best way is to play some of your favourite music on them — this gives you a reference point from which to compare the music you are mixing, particularly from a volume and EQ viewpoint. If you do own a good quality set of home stereo speakers or a high-end set of USB speakers, these may actually do. No matter what you use, always test your music in the real world by playing it in your car, on a friend's portable stereo or through your iPod — any audio discrepancies will stand out well in that environment.

One other important note — if the speakers you buy aren't powered, you will also have to buy an amplifier for them.

Budget: Alesis Monitor 1 MkII (\$469 per pair; Electric Factory, 03 9480 5988).

High-end: Event ASP6 (\$2755 per pair; Rode Microphones, 02 9648 5855)

Your headphones. I've already warned against heavy use of headphones, but they are an important part of any studio. The better the quality of headphone you buy, the less fatigue will creep in. There are two options: closed or open. Opinions are split on which is better. I personally prefer closed or semi-closed headphones that eliminate most outside noise, although fatigue can set in quicker than with open headphones where more normal ambience is achieved. Like everything, try both out for yourself if you can. Don't bother with wireless headphones at this stage.

Ear ear. When choosing headphones, think about quality of sound and isolation of ambient noise, not the effect they'll have on your hair.



Start here. You don't have to spend a lot of money for a good quality audio interface.



Budget:

Behringer HPS5000 closed headphones (\$70; Behringer Australia, 03 9877 7170)

High-end: AKG K240 semi-open headphones (\$299; Audio Products Group 02 9669 3477)

The space you need. if you're serious about making music at home, then you're going to be spending a lot of time working with your Mac and your music gear. Most people getting into making music aren't likely to buy a whole new desk or workstation at the outset, but if you end up doing it as a serious hobby then you may need to look at your furniture. Studio furniture is an area where it really does hurt to live in Australia. Here, manufacturers such as M-Rack (see "Hot links") offer a large range of options. You can expect to pay \$2000 or more. On the lower-budget side, I know of a number of musicians who use furniture purchased from IKEA — they just love some of the desks that are designed for small spaces. A third option (and one I took) was to design my own workstation and then pay a professional carpenter to make it.

Whichever route you take, the principles are the same.

Work on the assumption that you will never have enough room for everything. Think big. Today you may only have hardware that takes up one rackmount space. Assume that won't always be the case and have spare rackmount space. If you do buy a pre-made rackmount unit, get quotes from IT supplies stores as well as music stores. A standard rack has identical measurements in both industries.

Think workflow. Because you'll be spending a great deal of time with the furniture and what's sitting on it, spend some time mapping out how your work may flow.

I made the mistake once of having my synth 180-degrees from my Mac.

Imagine the time spent swivelling between Mac and keyboard. More mistakes are made and the process is a lot less enjoyable. If you can, have your monitor speakers positioned either side of your Mac or instrument of choice — ideally both. If you play keyboard, there are a lot of furniture options where your keyboard can sit under or above your Mac's keyboard.

Keep as much of your gear within reach as possible. You probably won't be able to avoid some stuff being stored underneath your desktop. Just make sure it's the gear you use the least. Don't make the mistake of needing to contort yourself to access a key effects rack or amplifier.


Think acoustics. Traditionally, one of the main selling points of recording in a professional studio aside from the high-end gear was the acoustic qualities of such a recording space. Your home studio can't replicate this one hundred percent, but there are some basic things you can do to minimise noise and unwanted echoes or other acoustic anomalies.

Ethan Winer is a well known identity in the acoustics field and his web site (see "Hot links") is a goldmine of information. Some of it is highly technical but there are also some excellent pictures that demonstrate what you need to do. Ethan also moderates a discussion forum where you can ask for direct feedback from other home studio users on how they've set up their environment acoustically. There are also some common tips and tricks around reducing noise without needing to renovate your room. I know of some home studios that drape blankets around a microphone stand to dampen noise when recording vocals.

There are also off-the-shelf acoustics kits. The Auralex Roominator kit (\$499; Major Music, 02 9525 2088) is one — it contains a number of foam pieces that you place on key parts of walls in your room to minimise echo and slap.

Support systems and education.

Never underestimate the power of music technology discussion forums and knowledge bases when setting up your studio. If you've finalised your shopping list, delay your purchase by that extra few days so you have time to out feelers out on what has worked for others. If you make the effort to introduce yourself first and then ask for feedback on your purchasing decisions, you can get some really good information within an hour or two. My number one recommendation would be The Big Blue Lounge (see "Hot links") it's devoted to OS X-related music making and has a very large user community from both the pro and home user demographic. Another recommendation would be the Harmony Central forums (Phil O'Keefe's In The Studio Trenches forum in particular (see "Hot links")). Both are welcoming of newcomers and full of searchable information.

The last word. If you can dedicate a few weeks to researching the gear you want for your studio, you'll be so much better off in the long run. Don't be afraid to ask questions online or at your place of purchase. Stay vigilant for outbreaks of GAS and most importantly, create music for your family, friends or the world. 

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Hot Links

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tcpmp.corecodec.org

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Make my next iPod a PDA

PDAs are more than electronic diaries — they're portable multimedia power-houses. Now that flash memory is approaching iPod capacities with 2GB cards under \$100, a properly set up handheld can give many iPods a run for their money.

Palm those tunes. For the Palm I like Pocket Tunes. It supports MP3, WMA, OGG and WAV files and can accept other codecs as plugins. At just 850K, this application packs a lot of punch in a trim package. Installation is very easy, with the only decisions to make being which audio formats you want to install support for as OGG and WAV support are optional.

The Pocket Tunes interface only takes a short time to figure out, with clearly defined buttons and options and a skinnable interface. As playing back media files can have significant impact on battery life Pocket Tunes can be set to power down the screen after a pre-determined interval. It also supports background play so that you can keep listening to your music while using other applications. Metadata about the song is clearly displayed on the screen while it's playing.

A five-band graphic equaliser and Bass Boost lets you get the most from your music. The equaliser supports up to eight presets so you can have Pocket Tunes ready for classical, jazz, rock or several other musical styles.

Creating and managing playlists is a breeze and Pocket Player supports formats from a number of other players making it easy to switch or to share lists with friends using different players.

Pocket Tunes costs \$US14.95 and a 15-day trial is available.

Play from your pocket. All Pocket PCs ship with a copy of Windows Media Player for playing back WMA and MP3 media. However, if you want a graphic equaliser and need support for a wider variety of music formats then Pocket Player makes a great choice.


Pocket Player is a highly customisable application with a skinnable interface and the ability to assign functions to your device's hardware buttons, making your Pocket PC more like a dedicated portable music player. During playback the

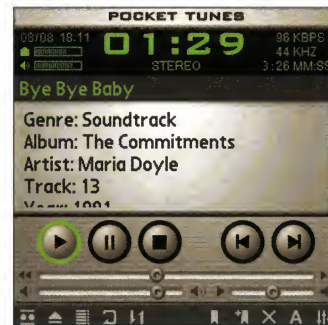
screen will power down after 60 seconds saving your battery and giving several hours of playback.

Pocket Player makes its mark with a plug-in for the Today screen that gives you basic playback control and icons in the alert area, near the Start menu and the system tray. Any or all of these can be easily disabled from Pocket Player's options.

Pocket Player is available online for \$US19.95. There's a 30-day trial version so you can try before you buy and there are CAB file installers so that you won't have to find a Windows PC for installation.

Moving pictures. As well as audio, most PDAs are great for watching video. In previous issues, AMW has discussed using HandBrake for ripping DVD content. For playback on the Pocket PC you can't go past The Core Media Player (TCMP). It can play just about every format — even a few that VLC, the most versatile player for the Mac, can't manage.

TCMP comes in both Pocket PC and Palm flavours and just works. Best of all, it's free. 




Your music, your call

IT'S an age-old problem. You're chilling out, listening to some tunes on your iPod and you miss a call on the mobile. Jabra has solved that dilemma with the BT325s headset.

The BT325s has two audio inputs. You can pair it to your mobile and use it as a wireless hands-free but still connect it to your iPod with a 3.5mm headphone connector. This means you're listening to your iPod with a wired connection, elimi-

ated, but keeps playing, and the phone comes through over the Bluetooth connection. The initial set up only takes a few seconds. Once that's done you're listening to music from your iPod and able to take calls seamlessly.

My main criticism is that if you plan to use it as the only hands-free for your phone, the lead for connecting to your iPod dangles from the end of the device. It would nice if it could be unplugged like the

Jabra's web site for suppliers. 





Hot Links

www.vertu.com
Vertu mobile phones
www.motorola.com/US/DG
Motorola and Dolce & Gabbana

Bling ring



It was the mid 1990s when Nokia cottoned on to the idea that the mobile phone had begun to shift from tool to fashion accessory. It introduced the 5100 series phone, which was the first that allowed owners to change the look of the phone easily with replaceable covers. Today, mobiles are available in a massive array of colours and styles but none stand out more than the latest head-turners from Nokia and Motorola.

D&G style. The RAZR range of phones has taken the world by storm. Initially released in silver but later in black and pink they've become exceptionally popular so it's no surprise that the folks at Moto chose the V3i as the basis for their ultimate fashion accessory. An enhanced V3i has been co-branded with one of the most famous fashion houses on the planet — Dolce and Gabbana.

Motorola and Dolce & Gabbana have created a new version of the V3i in luxurious gold and silver, with an engraved Dolce & Gabbana logo. Further glamour is added with an exclusive pendent featuring the gold DG initials. They've also added some new backgrounds, screensavers, MP3 ring tones and animations.

Some exclusive matching accessories have also been created including a personalised compatible Motorola Bluetooth Headset H700, a wired stereo headset for listening to MP3 music files and a luxury gold leather phone case. Not every phone shop is going to carry it, but hunt around if you're in the market for some exclusive flash.

Top end of town. With its Vertu brand, Nokia takes bling to a whole new level. With handmade casings starting at a lazy \$7500 the designer phones are the sort

of the thing you'd see on Lifestyles of the Rich and Shameless. In fact, they can be customised, with a recent shopper at Nokia's flagship store in Michigan forking out an incredible \$US90000 for a platinum casing encrusted with jewels. However, even at that price Bluetooth's not a standard feature and accessories such as cases and data cables cost extra.

As well as the phones, Vertu offers a special concierge service. Just press a button and you can make restaurant and movie booking almost anywhere in the world. Not bad if you're happy to spend the monthly fee.

Vertu's phones are constructed from a variety of materials — just don't ask for plastic unless you want the sales assistants to sneer at you. The handsets are available from a variety of resellers including specialist jewellers in most major Australian cities. ☞

Pocket PC PIM Wars

WHEN the Pocket PC was introduced, one of the biggest criticisms was that the PIM applications were underpowered and didn't really help busy people.

That was the trigger for the development of Pocket Informant and Agenda Fusion. Asking a user community which is the better product is likely to cause a religious war of similar magnitude to the Ford versus Holden debate. Both are great products and have been recently updated.

Agenda Fusion is now in its eighth release and is a very solid, mature product. The diary views are a huge leap forward from the default calendar, with icons and colour coding available to make it easy to find events. Even though you wouldn't expect a monthly view to be usable on a Pocket PC screen, the clever use of colour

makes it easy to see which days are already busy. However, I prefer the way this is done in Pocket Informant as I find it easier to get a feel for what days are busiest at a quick glance.

One of the biggest holes in the standard Tasks application is that there's no support for hierarchic tasks. Both Pocket Informant and Agenda Fusion allow tasks to be created with subordinate tasks beneath them. This allows them to both be used as basic project management tools.

Given that PIM data is linked in actual use, I like that it is possible to create tasks that are linked to calendar entries and contacts. For example, if I have to do some pre-reading and call a colleague before a meeting I can create the meeting in my diary and create tasks to do the reading and make the call. With both applications I can

link those three activities and access them from any one of the items that are involved.

It's very hard to make a call on which is the better product. My personal preference is with Pocket Informant but I started using it first a few years ago and have become accustomed to how it works. Agenda Fusion is a great product as well.

Agenda Fusion 8 costs \$US29.95 and Pocket Informant 2007 sells for \$US24.95. Both are available with Mac friendly installers and have 15-day trial versions. ☞



Hot Links

www.pocketinformant.com
Pocket Informant
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By Seamus Byrne



Hot Links

www.matrox.com/video/products/mxo/

All about MXO

www.newmagic.com.au

Australian Matrox distributor

Matrox reloaded

TRYING to get a good feed of computer screen video to an external video source isn't easy, as anyone who has toyed with the concept will confirm. Solutions can be very expensive, relying on the purchase of internal video cards to handle the process. A few breakout box solutions have been around, but few have been able to deliver the clarity needed for professional broadcast needs. Now we have the Matrox MXO, and all is well in the world.

Matrox has been a name of note in high-end graphics output for some time, the kind that gets more than passing attention when an external video conversion box is announced. The MXO doesn't disappoint either, delivering an easy-to-use box that delivers pristine results.

A wealth of capabilities. Perhaps one of the most exciting parts of the equation is the external box delivering results akin to any internal solution, missing only dual-link HD-SDI from its mix of output offerings. This box means you don't have to kit out every machine in your office if you don't need them all to be running broadcast output at the same time. That's a big saving over internal card solutions.

The MXO is compatible with all Macs with a DVI connector, including laptops. All G5 and Intel processors get a thumbs-up, but MacBook and Mac mini systems aren't going to cut the mustard due to their GMA950 on-board graphics. PowerBook G4 systems are supported, but listed as "not recommended for HD editing".

Results speak for themselves.

So what can it deliver? Genlockable HD/SD-SDI, HD/SD analogue component, Y/C, and composite outputs. The SDI can deliver up to eight channels of embedded audio output (though I couldn't specifically test this output on my test rig). It can also perform multiple simultaneous outputs



across SDI and component at once, in either HD or SD.

There are really two main areas of use for the MXO. You can use it to perform hardware accelerated video output from Final Cut Pro or After Effects (on a G5), for example, or you can use it to deliver direct feed of a screen output for use in broadcast video.

In the first instance, known as Mastering Mode, the MXO takes DVI preview output and gives frame-accurate broadcast-quality synced video/audio. Interlacing artefacts are also removed during preview on a secondary DVI output. It appears better than just a straight de-interlace too, so there must be some processing going on to get these nicer results. The accelerated output works for DVCPRO HD, HDV, and Final Cut Pro Dynamic RT footage, delivering full speed playback where your system might otherwise chug on the real time processing.

MXO will also take on the task of upscaling when necessary, conforming DVCPRO HD and HDV up to true 1080i or 720p output framing. Similarly, real-time downscaling to SD can also be performed, with true colour space conversions as part of the process.

The second output mode is known as Presentation Mode, with the MXO mirroring the display content in both SDI and component video simultaneously. Excellent for use in software training videos, or Keynote/PowerPoint presentations. Or maybe some video game recording for machinima? If it is an application and you can think of a reason to record it for broadcast, you're covered.

In this mode, MXO will either downscale your desktop resolution to the video mode of your choice, or if your desktop is smaller it will centre it on the video output.

Notable limitations. Of the issues I have seen, the biggest is no support for 24p footage. It may arrive down the line, though whether that would be a firmware or larger hardware update is unknown at this time.

Another problem identified through the MXO web site forums is it can run hot after extended use. If you need to run upward of four hours, you may encounter a warning followed by a safety shut down. You can resume quickly after this, but for high-volume or live output environments it may be a big nuisance.

Of course, this isn't a complete solution for broadcast video — those who need SDI inputs, dual-link or 10-bit output will need to go to internal solutions with desktop machines (like Australia's own fabulous Blackmagic Design and its Decklink and Multibrige lines).

For those who have less demanding needs of flicker-free DVI output and HD/SD scaled, synced output that can attach to different computers in your studio, the MXO is an excellent option to have out there.

System requirements include OS X 10.4.7 and graphics that can handle 1920x1200 (and an output monitor that can handle that too). 2GB RAM is highly recommended, and a must for HD. Matrox MXO carries a recommended retail price of \$1849, and for more info contact distributor New Magic Australia (see "Hot links").



Hot Links

www.avchd-info.org
A new kind of camcorder
www.sony.com.au
Sony Style

HD goes non-linear

AVCHD, you say? Has Sony given us yet another proprietary format to contend with?

Thankfully not. AVCHD cameras are actually delivering video that conforms to the MPEG-4 H.264/AVC video standard. Panasonic is a co-licensor of the AVCHD format, with Canon, Pioneer, Samsung and Sharp all listed as "supporters", so we should expect to see more AVCHD options coming soon.

The Sony releases offer five bitrate options, with the upper bitrates delivering video that is as good or better than HDV, while still taking less storage capacity. Sony lists the 9Mbps AVCHD bitrate as the HDV equivalent, whereas HDV runs at between 19 and 25Mbps. AVCHD should also improve on compression problems in fast motion segments.

While I am yet to attach one of these units to a Mac for editing, you can expect things will work smoothly thanks to QuickTime's H.264 support. All with the ease of a data import, rather than the time-consuming capture process.

HDR-UX1. The UX1 is a DVD-based recorder, where DVDs are used as the data storage medium — and that's where the

DVD part of the equation ends, as you can't use this camera to record to a DVD-compatible format. However, Sony says these discs will be compatible for playback on Blu-Ray players, including the PS3, so for early adopters this is a very nice element of future compatibility. When recording in SD mode, the DVDs are playable on standard DVD players, which will be nice for basic home video action. This SD footage will be DVD formatted, though, so it will be more difficult to import for editing.

This camera is compatible with 8cm DVD±R/RW and 8cm DVD+R DL. This last is the disc you'll want to use, as the HD record quality severely limits the capacity of DVD — no doubt we'll see a Blu-Ray version of such a camera down the track, when the media comes down to a more affordable level.

HDR-SR1. The most exciting model for more serious users is the HDD version, the SR1. This camera houses a 30GB hard drive that features some nice shock protection and buffering that helps secure your capacity for continuous recording — and to protect the drive itself.

The SR1 has a better highest quality bitrate than the UX1, and at that it still manages four hours of record time. The SR1 will also offer SD recording, though still recorded in the AVC format, which will maintain the ease of use in editing.

Both cameras also feature a big 3.5-inch LCD panel with touch controls, and a new assignable control ring that lets you put the focus, exposure, AE or white balance function onto the lens ring.

The UX1 will retail for \$2499; the SR1 for \$2699.

Model	Record Quality	Record Time
HDR-UX1	12Mbps	15min (SL) 27min (DL)
	9Mbps	20min 35min
	7Mbps	25min 45min
	5Mbps	32min 60min
HDR-SR1	15Mbps	4hr 00min
	9Mbps	7hr 00min
	7Mbps	8hr 30min
	5Mbps	11hr 00min

Sony DVDirect.

Think of it as your computer-free way to get any source material you have straight onto a DVD and ready to watch. From digital video off your camera to analogue sources to flash memory cards, they're all supported. You don't even need to plug it into a TV to use it, as it has a 2.5-inch LCD screen on board to give you all the menu feedback, video and image previews you need.

For videos, it can be set to place chapter markers at regular intervals too, a nice bonus when you are converting old VHS

tapes to DVD. The unit supports video input across composite, S-Video, USB and FireWire, and it will maintain original aspect ratio as well as Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound.

It will create video discs and slideshow discs from your images, but it sadly cannot create mixed-format discs. It will act as a bridge for printing to a PictBridge compatible printer, though many cameras can do that

direct themselves. Still a useful feature if you are keen to set up a simple printing station for your photos.

The DVDirect will be available this month for an RRP of \$399.



Hot Links
www.sony.com.au
Home of DVDirect



neil poulton

www.neilpoulton.com



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Latest news:

CNET awarded the Rugged mobile Drive with the excellent rating of 8.3/10, and Editor's Choice for August 2006. MacWorld USA gave a score of 4 mice to Little BigDisk 200GB in the October 2006 issue.

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By Ian Yates

**Hot Links**

www.illumin.com
Dean Golja's web site

Pro File: Dean Golja

DEAN Golja has been a professional photographer for the past 20 years and currently runs a commercial studio in St Peters, Sydney. He has a Masters in Electronic Arts from the Australian National University and teaches and exhibits regularly.

How has the Mac changed the face of photography since you started?

For better or worse, the Mac is responsible for broadening the skills of the photographer to incorporate practises that were once the domain of specialist groups.

Using a Macintosh coincided with the beginning of my professional photography practice some 20 years ago. For the first ten years the computer served as a useful tool for administration and graphics — invoices, quotes, letterheads. It was about ten years ago that scanners and printers became affordable and acceptable in quality but it was only in the last five that one could rely on a system of hardware and software that could give you enough control and flexibility to be able to expand your vision and often exceed the output that could be expected from professional labs.

The Mac's role in all this was more about assisting the potential of changes that were taking place in the industry. In the early days it wasn't only the superior design and graphic interface that mattered. It was more about the fact that external devices and software simply worked better on the system, therefore attracting those that were more creatively than technically motivated.

What parts of the photo process still take too much time despite using a Mac?

I cannot think of a single specific activity related to the photography process that is impeded by the use of a Mac as opposed to another system. However, it has to be mentioned, compared to taking a shot, processing a transparency or negative and

handing over the results to a client, the photographer's workflow has doubled over the last few years with the influx of digital photography. This increased workload also offers us greater creative control over our images but on the downside it takes time to get our heads around various programs, colour management, maintenance of the computer, cataloguing, backing up and storage of digital files.

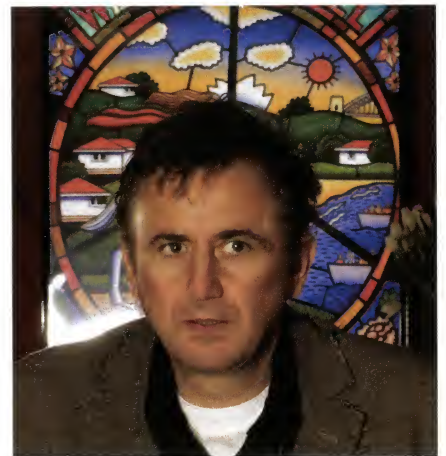
How do you handle storage of huge RAW files?

Having lost two lots of 300GB un-backed up volumes of digital data in the last two years due to hard-drive failure I now have a fairly serious approach to storage and archiving. Every RAID system that I've looked at is ridiculously expensive for what it does. My method is relatively simple and cost effective. All Raw (DNG) files are backed-up onto DVD fairly early and stored as a secondary back up. After the project is complete I transfer all files to an external hard-drive. The system I use incorporates a 250GB hard-drive on a removable tray (SohoTank) that can then be locked away in a cabinet next to my folders full of film. After just one year of digital capture I have managed to amass four of these archival volumes.

Where do you see the future of photography going?

One would hope that the medium of photography remains a valid art form for some time yet, although we have to acknowledge that the relevance of an image as a two-dimensional object on paper or plastic is diminishing. Whether it is on the artistic or commercial front we are less concerned with image quality and more accepting of what we see with screen technology, be it plasma TV or your 3G mobile phone et cetera.

In conversation with a Pulitzer Prize winning photojournalist the other day I was let in on the fact that all the photographers




on one major American newspaper were being equipped with High-Definition Digital Video cameras rather than still cameras for their assignments. There seems to be a growing trend to move away from print to screen-based methods of representation.

Any advice for people wanting to take the step from prosumer to professional?

Make sure you have a solid grasp of your techniques but don't be a slave to technology. Spend time developing your personal and aesthetic skills rather than accumulating gadgets.

What Mac and photo gear is in your current field kit and what is in your "digital darkroom"?

My photography gear includes an array of Hasselblad cameras and lenses through to the digital Nikon D2X with a 17-55mm 2.8 lens. My most recent camera is a GR Ricoh, which is like a digital equivalent to the Leica Rangefinder camera. I mainly work on a Mac G5 desktop and a 23-inch Cinema Display with a Spyder 2 Pro for monitor calibration. For scanning medium-format negatives I use an Epson 4990 and for output an Epson R1800 inkjet printer. My field kit consists of a G4 PowerBook and for most projects I stick with Photoshop CS2. 

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Show me the money

OVER the last two columns, I've been investigating the planning needed for the introduction of a 1:1 laptop program in a school. So far, I've looked at infrastructure and management — this time I'll deal with finance, as I want to leave teaching and learning until last.

This may seem an inverted approach, as most would see learning as the primary driver of the decision, and I'm not disagreeing with this. The point that I made in an earlier column was that reliability of operation was key: teachers and learners will not adopt any solution that isn't reliable, irrespective of the potential benefit. Financial planning needs to take this into account.

You'll need to cover the costs of professional development, infrastructure and management as well as the provision of the shiny laptops that students will carry around. Spare batteries and chargers, data projectors and screens will also impact, as will cameras and headphones. At least MacBooks now have audio-in (thankfully) and you don't need to buy expensive USB microphones for podcasting or voiceovers in movies.

You'll need a loan pool to replace faulty machines quickly, hence consider a fleet of the same or similar models. This should generate better time to repair as your warranty service provider will save on parts inventory (they'll have fewer models to keep stocks for).

Unlike US stories you may have heard, where whole states or large school districts get the price of an individual laptop down to ridiculous levels, single schools in Australia will need to develop a good relationship with a reputable dealer who can help negotiate volume discounts. The dealer should also take some of the responsibility for ensuring that all items will work well together (there's nothing worse than the "he said, she said" of one equipment supplier blaming another for incompatibilities).

Your business manager will tell you that there are two basic components to the finance structure: short term, recurrent expenditure and longer term items such as switchgear, wireless access points and servers. I'd put the laptops themselves into the recurrent basket and lease them — sometimes a hard thing to sell to accounting people, but use their language: dollar-speak.

When you factor in the cost of a new battery after two years, and the increasing number of outages for repairs as the machines suffer wear and tear, the difference is not that great between a three- or



Hot Links

www.convergemag.com/blueprint

US-based coverage of planning for computer deployment in schools

www.eschoolnews.com/news/showStory.cfm?ArticleID=6278

Of "2,500 school systems in the U.S. with at least 4,000 students, more than 23 percent said they are implementing 1-to-1 computing programs in at least one grade"

four-year lease and a two-year lease. The lessor also has a more saleable item when returned after two years and this is likely to result in lower repayments.

Avoid at all costs the retention of machines, perhaps for the next brothers or sister in line. Remember, reliability is key, and hand-me-downs are not reliable.

As a side benefit of treating the machines as recurrent expenditure, you'll save on the cost of upgrading the OS, now updated on a more sensible two-yearly schedule. When you consider the huge changes that have happened over the last few years, and I'll wager the next few, it would be foolish to forgo this.

This lease cost has to be paid by someone. I've seen models where

the school incorporates the cost of laptops into school fees and announces "free" laptops or those who ask parents to buy their own, and I find difficulties with both these strategies. First, based on the idea that no one washes a rental car, parents and students alike won't value a machine unless they see a distinct value attached to it. Second, parent-

owned machines cannot benefit from school software site licences.

Like many existing school plans, consider allocating at least part of the cost to a separate fee that is visible as providing technology. This is not just a ploy to keep fee rises down artificially, like airline "fuel taxes".

You may like to consider adding a bit to this fee to accommodate insurance. Commercially, this is a large expense, so you've got to ask: "Do we carry our own?" Insurance is not usually the core business of a school, but work with me here. Most school insurance policies have an excess which precludes claiming for a \$1400 laptop anyway.

In my experience, roughly one in every 10 kids will have an unwarrantable claim each year. Most claims of this nature result from drops and they come in three flavours: no damage, broken frame (\$200) and broken screen (\$1200).

If you do the maths, an excess of \$500 for any unwarrantable claim is a good bet, and is the sort of money that a parent could reasonably ask a child to contribute to with a part time job.

Whilst we're on figures, 23 percent of US school systems are now 1:1 in at least one grade level. What are you waiting for? 🐌

As an educator, Martin Levins likes empowering people to create using computing technologies.



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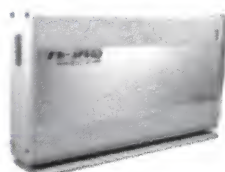
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Microsoft Office Pro 2004 Retail/Upgrade.....	\$754/\$485
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15 ways to find what you want online

Forget `http://www.` and `.com`. Don't waste time typing when you don't have to – almost all Mac web browsers automatically fill in some missing parts of URLs. For instance, if you want to visit `http://www.apple.com/`, just type `apple` in your browser's address field – the browser will add the `http://www.` and `.com` bits automatically. In browsers other than Netscape and Mozilla Firefox, you can even navigate directly to subpages using this trick – for instance, to visit Apple's main support page, type `apple/support`. — *adam c. engst*

Drag It to the web. Need to use something other than your default browser to check out a web page? Want to open a page, but its address is in an application that doesn't launch a browser when you double-click on a URL? There's no need to cut and paste. You can select a URL in most applications and drag it straight to the window of any Mac web browser to open it (see the screenshot "Open up"). You can also drag the URL to a browser's Dock icon. — *ace*

Stop squinting at tiny text. Many web sites designed to display in Internet Explorer for Windows use tiny font sizes, but there's no need to squint. In all Mac web browsers (except Opera Software's Opera), you can press `⌘=` (equal sign) to increase the text size. If the text gets too big, press `⌘-` (hyphen) to shrink it again. — *ace*

Cut clutter with tabs. One of the most fundamentally useful features in Apple's Safari isn't turned on by default. Tabbed browsing lets you load new web pages into individual tabs within one window. This means that you can easily switch between sites without getting lost in a clutter of open windows. To turn on this feature, select Safari: Preferences, click on the Tabs button, and choose the Enable Tabbed Browsing option. Now `⌘-click` on links to open them in new tabs, which you can view at your leisure. — *ace*

Hop between tabs. With keyboard shortcuts, you can move quickly between your web browser's tabs. In Safari, use `⌘-shift-right arrow` or `-left arrow`; in Firefox use `⌘-option-right arrow` or `-left arrow`. If neither shortcut works in your browser, check the browser's help pages to see what it uses. — *ace*

Close tabs quickly. If you've ended up with too many open tabs in Safari, quickly close all but the current one by pressing `⌘-option-W`. — *ace*

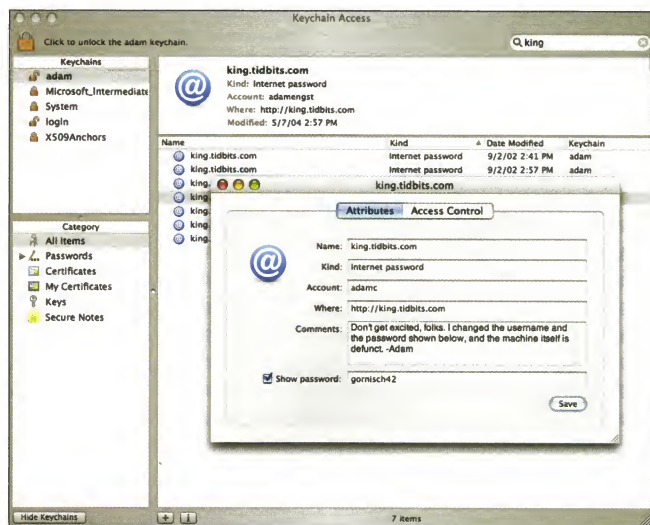
View photocasts in Safari. If you don't want to clutter Apple's iPhoto 6 with a photocast, or if you just prefer to look at pictures on a scrolling page in Safari 2.0.3, force Safari to display the photocast rather than handing it off. Paste the photocast's URL into Safari's address field, but before pressing return, change `http` to `feed`. (This works only if you haven't made another RSS program your default reader.) — *ace*

Find your passwords. From filling in your name and address to remembering your Amazon.com password, Safari's AutoFill feature works pretty well. (Go to Safari: Preferences and click on AutoFill.) Occasionally, though, you might need to fill in a password yourself or give one to another person. If you can't recall the magic word, don't worry – that's what Keychain Access (/Applications/Utilities) is for. Launch this utility and then use its search field to home in on a desired site (or server). Double-click on an entry to open it. In the Attributes tab, select the Show Password option and enter your administrator password. Your password for the site will appear (see the screenshot "What's the password?"). — *ace*

Find Firefox shortcuts. Firefox has oodles of keyboard shortcuts you can use to make your surfing faster and more efficient.

Open up. There's no need to copy and paste URLs into your browser. Instead, select one and just drag it to your browser window, as you see here. The page will open automatically.





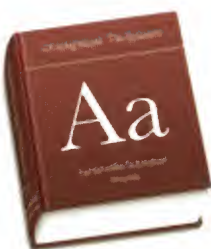
What's the password? If you've forgotten one of the passwords that Safari usually fills in automatically for you, use Keychain Access (/Applications/Utilities) to look it up.

My favourite is option-home, which instantly opens your home page. For a complete list, check out Mozilla's dedicated page (see "Hot links"). — ace

Sync your bookmarks. Tired of having two different sets of Safari bookmarks — one on your iMac and one on your MacBook Pro? If you have a .Mac account, you can automatically synchronise your Macs' bookmarks on a regular basis. To turn this feature on, go to Safari: Preferences, click on Bookmarks, and select Synchronise Bookmarks With Other Computers Using .Mac — on both machines. (Bonus tip: Check out the .Mac preference pane, and you'll see that you can also synchronise calendars, contacts, keychains, accounts in Apple's Mail, and more.) — ace

See more search results. If Google doesn't find what you want in its first ten results, you have to click through multiple results pages, which can be tedious. You can get more results per page by visiting www.google.com, clicking on the Preferences link, and choosing a larger number from the Number Of Results pop-up menu. — ace

Go beyond Dictionary. When Dictionary can't help you understand the definition of a word that boggles you, try OneLook (see "Hot links") instead. Type a word into this site's search field, and OneLook looks for it in the online versions of more than 900 dictionaries and reference sources, including the reliable Merriam-Webster OnLine dictionary and Compact Oxford English Dictionary. — charles purdy



Launch your searches. Most web browsers make it easy to search Google right from a toolbar, but few simplify searching another web site that you might refer to often, such as Amazon.com or Wikipedia. For that, you need a launcher, such as Objective Development's LaunchBar, Peter Maurer's free Butler, and Blacktree's free Quicksilver (see "Hot links" for all three).

You can use a launcher to start a search without switching to your web browser or even touching the mouse. To search Wikipedia for information about ex-planet Pluto, for instance, invoke LaunchBar (with a keyboard shortcut you've set). Then press W to access the Wikipedia search template. (The first time you access a search template, you may need to select it from a pop-up list. From then on, LaunchBar will associate the letter with that site.) Press the spacebar to tell LaunchBar that the next keystrokes will be a search term, and then type pluto. — ace

Keep your receipts. The next time you buy something online, don't bother to jot down the confirmation number on an easy-to-lose sticky note. If you're using OS X 10.4, press ⌘-P when the site displays the receipt. In the Print dialog box that appears, click on PDF and select Save PDF To Web Receipts Folder from the drop-down menu. OS X creates a PDF of your receipt and saves it in your user folder/Documents/Web Receipts. — joe kissell

Hidden helper

Shrink PDFs with Preview. Some PDF files

— particularly those with graphics — can be too big to send via e-mail or download over a dial-up connection. Sure, you can buy a tool that shrinks PDFs, but Preview 3 may be all you need. Open a PDF in Preview and choose File: Save As. In the Save dialog box, give the file a new name.

Then choose Reduce File Size from the Quartz Filter pop-up menu and click on Save. When I exported a photo-heavy calendar as a PDF file from iPhoto, Preview reduced its size from 10.4MB to an e-mail-friendly 828K. Some caveats: Reduced files won't display or print as clearly as the originals, bookmarks are lost, and PDFs that have already been optimised or that are quite small may grow in size. Preview makes tasks such as slimming an iPhoto book layout before sending it to a relative easy and free. — ace



Hot Links

www.mozilla.org/support/firefox/keyboard

Firefox keyboard shortcuts

www.onelook.com

The ultimate online dictionary

www.obdev.at/products/launchbar/index.html

www.petermaurer.de/nasi.php?section=butler

quicksilver.blacktree.com/

Launchers



Tame E-mail

15 ways to tame your in-box and eliminate spam

Never forget an attachment. Tired of clicking on Send only to realise moments later that you forgot to attach a file to that e-mail message? You need Attachment Scanner (see "Hot links"), James Eagan's free plug-in for Mail 2.0. The plug-in scans outgoing messages for words, such as attached and attaching, that suggest you might have intended to enclose something. If the message has no attachments, an alert appears when you click on Send. — *joë kissell*



Check for overstuffed accounts. There's no need to miss messages because you've unknowingly reached your ISP's e-mail quota. In Mail 2.0, you can check to see how close you are to reaching the storage limit and which mailboxes may need pruning. Press ⌘-I to display the Account Info window, and choose your account from the Account pop-up menu at the top. — *jk*

Quickly copy multiple attachments. With Mail 2.0, you can quickly copy multiple attachments from a message onto your desktop or into another folder. First make sure that individual attachments aren't showing in the header; if they are, click on the disclosure triangle next to the header's paper-clip icon to collapse the display. Then just click and drag the paper-clip icon to the desired location (see the screenshot "Clip and drag"). — *jk*

Clip and drag. If you use Apple's Mail, there's a fast way to save all of a message's attachments at once. Just drag the paper-clip icon in the message header to your desktop or to another folder.



Hidden helper

Easy .Mac access with Address Book. Chances are, more than a few of your contacts have .Mac addresses. Care to peruse the goodies they've put in their public iDisk folders? Address Book makes it easy. Create a smart group with the condition Email Contains @mac.com. All your Address Book contacts with .Mac addresses will now appear in the group. Control-click on the address next to an entry — the Home address, for example — and choose Open iDisk. In moments, that person's iDisk Public folder will mount on your Mac. Explore and download what you like. — *christopher green*



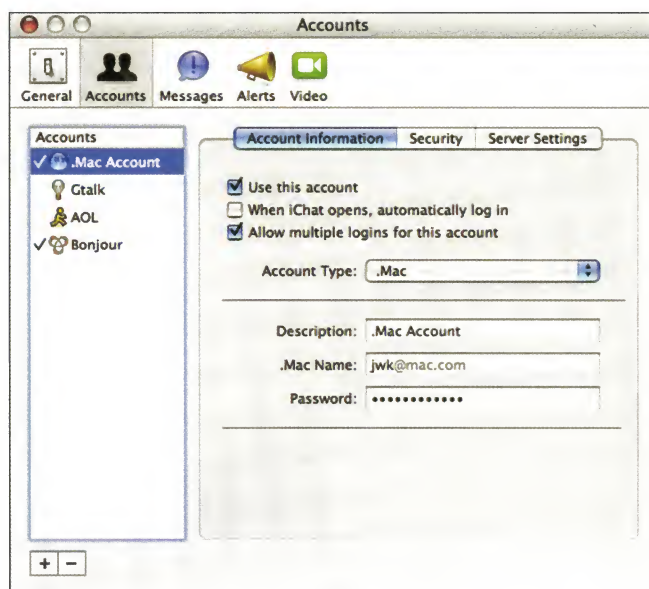
Retrieve missing quote. If you begin composing a new message in Mail 2.0 and then realise that you meant to quote part of another message, you don't have to open a new window, copy, switch back, and paste. Instead, select the message you want to quote, return to your new message window, and choose Edit: Append Selected Messages (or press ⌘-option-I). The quoted message (including any attachments) will appear at the bottom of the new message. — *jk*

PDFs — Pronto! Need to e-mail someone a PDF of the document you're working on? Here's the fast way. Open the document and press ⌘-P. In the Print dialog box that appears, click on PDF and select Mail PDF from the drop-down menu. OS X will create a PDF and attach it to a new outgoing message in Mail. — *jk*

Take the larger view. In Mail, you're not limited to one window for displaying your mailboxes and message lists. Choose File: New Viewer Window to open an additional window (or more than one). Multiple viewer windows let you see different accounts, sorting orders, column arrangements, or views at the same time, without a lot of tedious clicking and rearranging. — *jk*

Hang up on hung-up Mail. Mail sometimes gets hung up in the process of sending mail, receiving it, synchronising, or performing other background activities. If the program seems slow, you don't necessarily need to quit Mail altogether. Choose Window: Activity Viewer to display a list of





Take two. Use more than one Mac at a time? Select this option to make incoming iChat messages appear on both screens at the same time.

all the tasks Mail is performing. Click on the Stop icon next to any task to cancel it. —jk

Full-service mail. If you use Apple's Mail or Bare Bones Software's Mailsmith 2.0, you can use the Services menu to make e-mailing easier. For example, select some text on a web page and choose Services: Mail: Send Selection (or Services: Mailsmith: Send Selection) to create a new message containing the selected text. Select an e-mail address and choose Services: Mail: Send To (or Mailsmith: Send To) to create a new message with the selected address in the To field. (Some apps, including those in Microsoft's Office 2004 suite, don't support services.) —jk

Focus on what's new. Hide older messages in any Microsoft Entourage 2004 mail folder by choosing View: Unread Only, or pressing ⌘-shift-O. Only unread messages will remain visible. Repeat the process to make all your messages visible again. —tom negrino

Set your Entourage data free. If you use Entourage 2004 on more than one Mac, syncing all your messages and settings over a network can be tedious. Instead, back up your Microsoft User Data folder (in your user folder/Documents); then copy it to a USB flash drive. Now delete the original and, in your Documents folder, create an alias to the folder on the external drive (by selecting the folder in the Finder and then pressing ⌘-option while dragging it to the Documents folder). Do the same on your second Mac. Now all your Office apps on both machines will use the external drive to store their data. (Be sure to quit all Office applications before unmounting the drive. And don't forget to back up!) —jk

Deploy improved spam shields! Entourage 2004's Junk Mail Filter is decent, but it doesn't catch everything. And wily spammers come up with new tricks faster than Microsoft updates

software. For better protection, consider investing in Michael Tsai's SpamSieve 2.4.4 (see "Hot links"). Train this utility to sort through your mail by showing it actual spam and good mail. The extremely accurate SpamSieve works with Entourage to identify the spam as it arrives and shunt it to Entourage's Junk E-mail folder. —tn



Many Macs, one iChat account. You might use two Macs, but you'd probably prefer to use one chat account. It's possible to set up both computers to use the same AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) or .Mac account in Apple's iChat AV at the same time. Start up iChat on the first computer and take your AIM account offline (iChat: Log Out Of AIM). Then choose iChat: Preferences, click on the Accounts button in the toolbar, and select your account. Select the Allow Multiple Logins For This Account option (see the screenshot "Take two"). Now repeat the procedure on the second computer. Incoming messages will appear on both screens at the same time. —jk

One-way video chats. If you have an iSight camera and your friend doesn't, you can still use iChat AV to have a one-way video chat. Your friend will see your picture and, as long he or she has a microphone, you'll both hear each other. (No microphone? No problem. Your friend can type responses.) Select the other person's name in the Buddy List (Window: Buddy List) and choose Buddies: Invite To One-Way Video Chat. —jk

Learn to speed-read. Plough through your incoming mail faster by learning Entourage 2004's most important message-reading shortcut keys. —tom negrino

Entourage shortcut	What it does
⌘-[Displays the previous message. ^A
⌘-]	Displays the next message. ^A
control-[Displays the previous unread message. ^A
control-]	Displays the next unread message. ^A
spacebar	Scrolls down one screen of text, or displays the next unread message if you are at the end of the current message.
shift-spacebar	Scrolls up one screen of text.

^A Add the option key to this keyboard combination to delete the current message and then perform the action.



Hot Links

home.cc.gatech.edu/eaganj/MailApp
Attachment Scanner
c-command.com/spamsieve/
SpamSieve



Rule the Office

15 ways to impress your colleagues

Share and share alike. Need to use the same logo in documents and presentations? Store frequently-used text or images in Microsoft Office 2004's Scrapbook. In Word or Excel, select View: Toolbox; then click on the icon at the top left of the palette to reveal the Scrapbook.

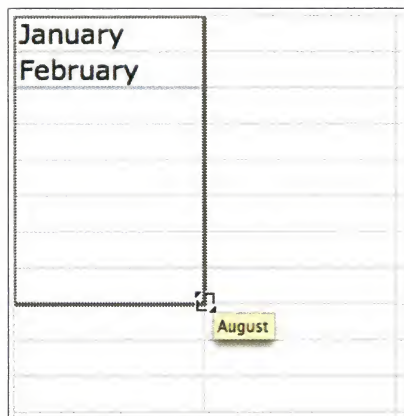


In Entourage or PowerPoint, select Tools: Scrapbook. Add something to the Scrapbook by selecting a bit of text or an image in a document and then clicking on Add in the Scrapbook palette. To paste an item into any Office document, select it in the Scrapbook and click on Paste. — *kirk mcelhearn*

Make pasted text match. When you paste text from web pages into Word, you'd probably like the pasted text to match the text in your document. In Word X, select Edit: Paste Special, select Unformatted Text, and click on OK. This pastes the text without any formatting; it should pick up the formatting of the location where you pasted it. If you use Word 2004, paste the text and then click on the Paste Options button that appears below the pasted text (it looks like a clipboard). Select Match Destination Formatting in the resulting menu. — *km*



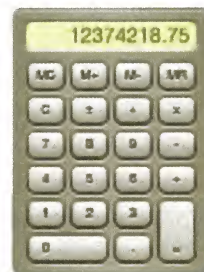
Save document images. If your Word 2004 documents contain graphics that you want to use elsewhere, you can drag the images to the desktop or to a folder, but they're saved as picture clippings, which aren't easy to share. Instead, just



No-sweat data entry. There's no need to type out a standard data series in Excel. Just type the first couple of entries, select, and drag — Excel is smart enough to fill in the rest of the series.

Hidden helper

Sum it up with Calculator. Whether you're performing complex equations or tallying up the profits from your latest bake sale, don't forget Calculator (/Applications). Its Paper Tape window (View: Show Paper Tape) displays a running summary of your calculations, but it can do much more than that. Say you've just made a calculation, and you want to redo it with different data. Click in the paper tape, change any of the numbers, and click on Recalculate Totals. When you type directly in the paper tape, use the usual operators (+, -, *, and /), as well as parentheses. — *km*



control-click on an image in a document, select Save As Picture from the contextual menu, and choose a file format from the Format menu. — *km*

Let Excel do the work. Instead of entering a list of standard data in Excel, let the AutoFill feature fill in the blanks. Type the first couple of entries in contiguous cells — for example, January and February. Select the cells you've filled; then click and move the cursor to the bottom right of the selection. When the cursor becomes a handle, drag down (or across). Tooltips display the next entries for the series. When you've reached the end, release the mouse button, and the cells will fill (see the screenshot "No-sweat data entry"). Try this with more-complicated patterns, too. — *km*

Use Office Equations in Keynote 3. Want to include complex equations in your Apple Keynote 3 presentation? If you own Office, get a helping hand from the Microsoft Equation Editor (one of Office's installation options). Open Word, choose Insert: Object; then choose Microsoft Equation from the resulting dialog box. The Equation Editor will open. Type your equation into it, using the editor's tools to add plenty of equationy goodness. Then select the equation and copy and paste it into a Keynote slide. It appears as a resizable graphic. — *tom negrino*

Dazzle 'em. The traditional laser pointer pales in comparison to The Omni Group's OmniDazzle (see "Hot links"), which lets



Focus in. Expand your presentation powers by pairing The Omni Group's OmniDazzle with PowerPoint or Keynote. This utility lets you underscore your points by highlighting a part of the screen and dimming the rest. Get creative

you zoom in on, highlight, and annotate your screen during your PowerPoint 2004 or Keynote 3 presentations (see the screenshot "Focus in"). To enable OmniDazzle in Keynote 3 or later, open Keynote's Slideshow preference pane, and select both the Allow Exposé, Dashboard And Others To Use Screen option and the Show Pointer When The Mouse Moves option. Check OmniDazzle's hardware requirements before downloading. — *tn*

Hide Keynote's movie controls. When there's a QuickTime movie on a Keynote 3 slide, the movie controller appears when you move your mouse. That's handy if you need to pause the movie, but it can also be distracting. To prevent the controller from appearing, make a copy of the current master slide and place the movie on the master slide, rather than on a regular slide. You can still control the movie from the keyboard. Press J to rewind, L to fast-forward, and K to play or pause. — *tn*

Go beyond bullet points. The best PowerPoint presentation I've ever seen didn't contain a single bullet point. It was given by Scott McCloud, who wrote *Understanding Comics* (Perennial Currents, 1994). This brilliant book will help you understand all forms of visual communication, including PowerPoint and Keynote — and it's written mostly as a comic book! Trust me on this one. I'm also a fan of the Beyond Bullets Weblog (see "Hot links"), by Cliff Atkinson. — *tn*

Use multiple inspectors at once. If you work with Apple's Pages or Keynote, you know how important the Inspector palettes are — they give you access to settings for text, images, layouts, charts, and more. If you click on the Inspector button in the programs' toolbars, however, only one Inspector window appears or disappears. To open multiple Inspector palettes choose View: New Inspector as many times as necessary. — *km*

Control Pages' template chooser. By default, Pages 2 displays the Template Chooser dialog box when you open the

program, or when you create a new document (File: New). Using the program's preferences (Pages: Preferences), you can make the program always use the Blank template (or another template if you prefer). When you want to see the Template Chooser dialog box again, hold down the option key when you select File: New. — *km*

41 Count 'em up. If you're disappointed that Apple's TextEdit can't give you a word count for the document you're writing, Paul Gorman's free NanoCount (see "Hot links") will improve your mood. This little program counts the number of words in the active TextEdit document (in Mac OS X 10.2 or later), updating the word count at the frequency you choose. — *km*

Fix missing PDF links in Preview. If a PDF's hot links don't work in Preview, make sure you have the Scroll tool selected. Choose Tools: Scroll Tool, press ⌘-1, or click on the Move Tool in the toolbar. — *adam c engst*

Fax faster. The quick way to send a document by fax in OS X 10.4 is to press ⌘-P, click on PDF, and select Fax PDF from the drop-down menu. OS X creates a PDF of your document and then sends it as a fax, using your Mac's built-in modem. If you don't have a built-in modem, sign up for an e-mail-to-fax gateway service, such as mBox MessageIn and MessageOut (see "Hot links"). Other similar services are also available, but mBox is the only Australian-based service that offers international faxing at this time. MessageNet, for example (see "Hot links") offers faxing only within Australia. — *joe kissell*

Control the flow. In Keynote 3 or PowerPoint 2004, it's usually better to control the show's progress from the keyboard than to fool with a mouse or trackpad. Here are the programs' most useful shortcuts. — *tom negrino*

PowerPoint 2004 Shortcut	Keynote 3 Shortcut	What It Does
B or period (.)	B	Shows a black screen.
W or comma (,)	W	Shows a white screen.
N, return, page down, right arrow, down arrow, or spacebar	N, return, page down, right arrow, down arrow, or spacebar	Moves to the next slide or the next animation within the slide.
slide number-return	slide number-return	Jumps to a slide number.
escape or 1-period (.)	escape, Q, or period (.)	Ends the presentation.



Hot Links

www.omnigroup.com/applications/omnidazzle/
OmniDazzle
www.beyondbullets.com
Bullet-proof presentations
blog.paulgorman.org/?p=53
NanoCount
www.mbox.com.au
www.messagenet.com.au
Australian e-mail to fax gateway services



Get Creative

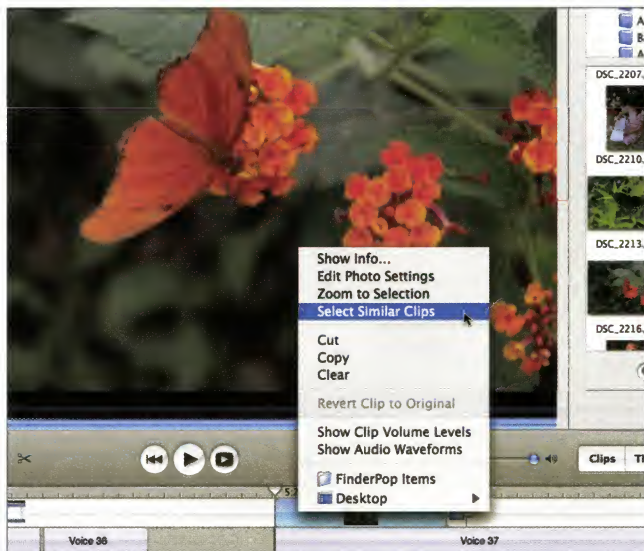
14 ways to release your inner artist

Presto change-o iPhoto sorting. When you need to sort loads of photos, iPhoto 6 has two tools that can get the job done together: smart albums and the Batch Change command. To gather all your pictures from last summer, for example, first create a smart album (File: New Smart Album) with the condition Date Is In The Range 1/11/05 To 1/2/06. Give it the name Sumer 05-06. Repeat the process to create additional smart albums for other summers. Then select all the photos in each summer album, choose Photos: Batch Change, and set Comments to Summer. Now create yet another smart album with the conditions Comments Contains Summer. Peer inside this album to see all your summer photos. — *christopher green*



Presentations on the cheap. Even if you don't own a full-blown presentation application, such as Keynote or PowerPoint, you may need one from time to time. Rather than pungle up for such a program, prepare your slides in an application you own — such as TextEdit or AppleWorks. Save the slides as graphics files, import them into any version of iPhoto (File: Import To Library), and put them all in an album (File: New Album). Use iPhoto's slide-show tools to create a simple presentation. — *cb*

Clip job. iMovie's Select Similar Clips command is the first step in applying one effect to multiple clips.



Zoom and grab. In iPhoto 6's Slideshow mode, the Zoom control at the bottom of the window and the Grab cursor that appears when you place your cursor in iPhoto's image-viewing area aren't just decorative. Any adjustments you make with these tools apply to the images when they appear in the slide show. Have a few smaller images that include black bars on the side? Zoom in and position them so they fill up the entire screen during the slide show. — *cb*

Save your slide-show settings. If you intend to show iPhoto 6 slide shows only on your Mac's display, it's easy to set things up just the way you like. First, select an album (or pictures within an album) and press the Play button at the bottom of the iPhoto window. This produces the Slideshow Settings window, where you can shut off the obnoxious Ken Burns effect and choose the slide show's transition and music. Click on the Save Settings button. The next time you view a slide show, hold down the option key as you click on play. The slide show will play immediately, using the settings you saved. — *cb*

A big batch of effects. A great way to save time in Apple's iMovie HD 6 is to select similar clips and apply the same effect to all of them — you could apply a Brightness & Contrast video effect to all the clips of your kid riding a surfboard, for example. Just control-click on one of the clips and choose Select Similar Clips from the contextual menu (see the screenshot "Clip job"). Any effect you choose will be applied to all selected clips. (This command will sometimes select clips you don't want selected.) — *cb*

Select all your clips. Some people find it frustrating that pressing ⌘-A doesn't select everything in iMovie's timeline — it selects only video clips. To select all audio or clips in iMovie HD 6 you must be in their timeline track. Click on an audio track, for example, and choose Edit: Select All (⌘-A). You can also select all video clips by control-clicking on an empty area of an audio track and choosing Select All from the contextual menu. — *cb*

Better iWeb searching. Apple's iWeb lets you place a search field in your site so viewers can search your content. (Select a blog or podcast page, reveal iWeb's Inspector window, click on the Blog & Podcast Inspector button, and enable the Display Search Field option.) These searching capabilities are limited. To give your viewers a more thorough option, add a Google Free Site Search button to your iWeb site. You can obtain the code, as well as directions for adding it to your page, direct from Google (see "Hot links"). — *cb*

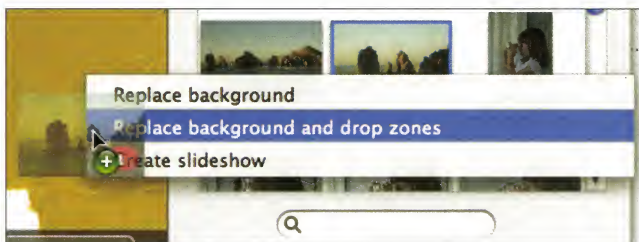
Better iWeb counting. iWeb's hit counter lets you tally up the total number of times satisfied visitors have opened a page (just choose a page and select Insert: Button: Hit Counter). If you'd like a more exact count — for example, one that counts unique visitors as well as page loads — check out the free StatCounter (see "Hot links"), an invisible web tracker that provides web stats that detail unique, returning, and repeat visitors. It also offers analysis of visitors' browsers, operating systems, and more. — *cb*

Autoplay (or not). Most web-site visitors dislike music and movies that play automatically when a page is opened. As a result, iWeb doesn't let you add autoplay movies or music by default. If you're determined to design a serenading site, you can. Create your page, save the site, and then open the folder that contains the files for your site. (If you're using .Mac, it will be at /iDisk/Web/Sites/iWeb/Your Site's Name.) Locate the JavaScript file within the page's Files folder (for example, Welcome.js in the Welcome_files folder). Open the JavaScript file in a text editor, such as TextEdit, and search for incidences of `autoplay=false`. Change false to true. — *cb*

Replace background and drop zones. In Apple's iDVD 6, when you drag a picture into a theme that includes drop zones, only the background image changes — the drop zone and its graphic remain. You can install a new background image and remove the drop zones in one step by holding down the \mathbb{H} key while dragging the picture into iDVD's main window. When you do, a contextual menu will give you the option to replace the background and drop zones (see the screenshot "Zone out"). — *cb*

Make it a deluxe DVD. Grandma will certainly appreciate a DVD that includes a slide show of your latest family adventure, but you can make your gift even better by including the original images as well. You can do so in iDVD 6 by choosing Advanced: Edit DVD Contents. Click on New Folder in the resulting DVD-ROM Contents window, and drag your original pictures into this folder. Lucky DVD recipients will find the images in the folder you created at the root level of the disc when they pop the disc into a computer. — *jeff carlson*

Who's got the button? Drag buttons in GarageBand's Loop Browser to rearrange their order.



Zone out. Use this handy command to replace an iDVD project's background and delete its drop zones in one step.

The limits of locking. Playing an Apple GarageBand 3 project with lots of tracks can overburden your computer's processor, causing tracks to drop out or distort. One solution is to lock tracks by clicking on the lock icon in the Tracks column of each track you want to lock — in other words, render them to your computer's hard disk. This can free up processing power, allowing you to use more tracks — but there's a gotcha. If you have a Mac with a slow hard drive (an iBook with a 5400-rpm drive, for example), locking tracks isn't as effective. GarageBand writes each track to disk (instead of processing the effects in real time), so as you add more locked tracks that need to be read from the hard disk, the slower drive won't be able to keep up. If that's the case, consider purchasing more RAM and a faster hard drive — or a new computer. — *cb*



Rearrange your loops. Whether you're looking for bongo grooves or a spacey electric piano, Apple's default arrangement of sound sets in the GarageBand 3 Loop Browser is intuitive. (If you can't see the Loop Browser, click on the eye icon at the bottom left of the GarageBand window.) If your mind works another way, you don't have to stick with the default order. Rearrange the position of any button by dragging it on top of another (see the screenshot "Who's got the button?"). — *cb*

Free up tracks with submixes. For those times when you want to play a GarageBand project in other iLife '06 applications, GarageBand 3 gives you the option of saving the project as an iLife Preview. But this file format can also help you when you're creating complex musical masterpieces. If you're running short on tracks, create a submix by saving your mixed project as an iLife Preview. Go to GarageBand: Preferences, choose the Render A Preview When Saving option, and then choose File: Save. Now open a new project and import the iLife Preview of the previous project. It will import as a single stereo track. Build the rest of your project from there. — *cb*



Hot Links

services.google.com/searchcode2.html?accept=on
Add Google searching to your iWeb site
www.statcounter.com
StatCounter

By Sean McNamara.

Banks versus firewalls

Help folder

We answer our readers' questions

Each month STM 02 8338 0222 gives a Sports backpack valued at \$129.95 to the *Australian Macworld* reader who send in the most intriguing Help folder query.

You need to carry your laptop, documents, gym gear and other bits and pieces. Do you carry two bags? No, you get an STM sports backpack. There's a large compartment for whatever you can cram in, space for your notes and exterior pockets for iPod, water bottle, newspaper etc. There's even an exterior mesh pocket for your lunch. The ergonomically designed back system and shoulder straps take much of the strain off your shoulders.

Like all STM bags, it doesn't look like there's a laptop inside the Sports backpack, keeping your precious notebook safe from preying eyes and wandering hands.

Send your query to matthew.powell@niche.com.au for consideration in Help folder. Include your full mailing address to be eligible to win the Sports backpack. All queries and solutions are the sole property of Niche Media.

■ Sean McNamara is a Sydney-based consultant trading as MacAssist.



■ When I turn on my built in Apple firewall my bank's servers cannot recognise my iBook. Turn it off and hey presto we're in business again.
Dr George Waters via internet

Networking on the internet uses the concept of "ports" to help keep track of which piece of data belongs to which program on the recipient computer.

For example, the port attribute is set (by default) to 80 for web traffic, so that when a server receives a packet of data with that port assigned, it knows to hand it over the web server software running on it.

The built-in Mac OS X firewall follows rules about which ports

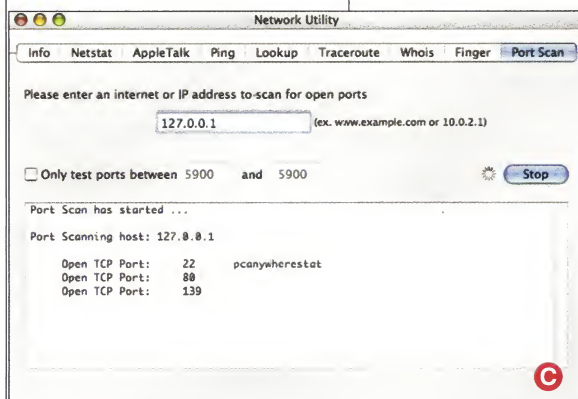
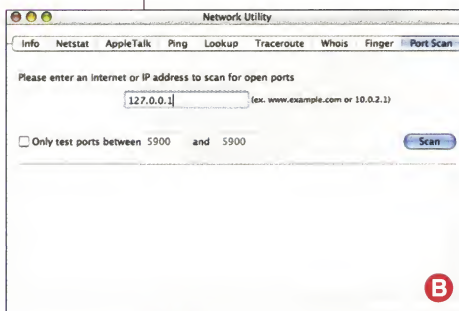
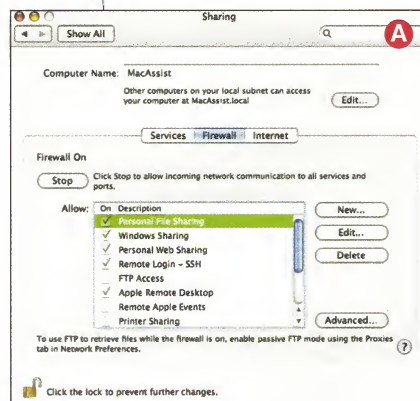
to allow and block — it blocks everything except those ports which are explicitly turned on, some of which are pre-configured "out-of-the-box" **A**.

Mac OS X automatically turns on the ports for the services which have been turned on in the Sharing System Preferences pane — there's no use blocking what you've said you want to allow!

What seems to me to be happening is that the bank's software is listening on a port for traffic coming from the bank — not the ideal way to handle things, in my view, but that's the only sort of traffic that the built-in firewall blocks.

What we need to know is what ports are only open when you're on the bank's system. Luckily Mac OS X includes a utility which allows us to find this out: the Network Utility found in (not surprisingly) the Utilities folder in the Applications folder.

First, while you're not on the bank's system, open Network Utility and click on the Port Scan



Hot Links

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Universal_Serial_Bus#Transfer_speed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Serial_Bus#Transfer_speed)
Wikipedia article on USB versions
support.apple.com/specs/iBook/iBook_G4_Mid_2005.html
support.apple.com/specs/emac/eMac_ATI_Graphics.html
Apple Specifications database articles
lokiw.com/MailAttachmentsIconizer
Mail Attachments Iconizer

Printer preset problems

2

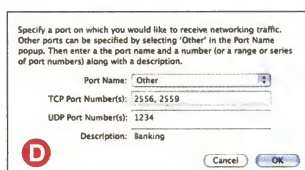
tab **B**. Type in 127.0.0.1 (your machine's own "loopback" address — its first-person pronoun) in the IP address field, make sure the "Only test ports between" checkbox is unticked, and then press Scan **C**.

There are over 65000 ports to scan, so it'll take a while — we haven't any idea which port range to look at, so we just have to wait. When it's finished (the button will change back to Scan and the list will show that the scan has completed), print out the results for later reference.

Then open up your banking system, make sure it's fully operational, and then run the scan again. While the scan is running, continue to use the banking system to make sure the port stays open. Print out the results — you can then log out of the banking system for a while.

Compare the printouts — what we should see is one or more extra entries. Open up System Preferences, click on Sharing, then Firewall, then click the New... button. Choose Other from the popup menu, enter a description like "Banking", then enter all of the extra ports labelled as TCP ports from the port scans in the appropriate field, and all of the extra ports labelled as UDP in the UDP field if there's more than one of each type, separate them with commas **D**.

Once you've entered all the extra ports, click OK, then turn the firewall on and see if the banking system works. If it doesn't you may need to contact your bank to see what ports need to be opened or what needs to be done when you're behind a firewall.



■ I have a problem when printing to my printer, which is a Mac OS X problem (it's not an issue with Mac OS 9).

I have a Xerox DC400 colour printer connected to a network. When I select File>Print the default print mode is colour. If I go to Printer and change it to black, the print will be in black — which is OK.

My issue is that if I go to print the same document again, by hitting the print icon, the document will print colour. On checking the print preset it still shows black. The only workaround is every time I wish to print a document in black (not black CYMK, if it is a text-only file) is to click on the printer, then the black preset — each and every time we want to print it.

This becomes an issue when we pay 1.6 cents per black and white copy and 22 cents per colour copy click charge plus toner, etc.

This is also an issue with page sizes. If I am printing to a non-standard page size, even if I make it the default page size after the print job it will revert to the nearest page size set as a default in Mac OS X. The issue as I see it is that the computer resets itself after each and every job and won't retain the information.

Adobe Acrobat will remember the page preset, not the colour setting. Spoke to Adobe, which is aware of the problem — I sent a urgent request for a fix but it doesn't seem to be happening.

I've rung Apple support — it knows about the problem and as I have Panther, felt that there is little chance of a remedy. I am not sure if this is a problem with Tiger.

Bill Allitt
via internet

Part of the problem here, Bill, is that the manufacturers have assumed that, if you have a colour printer, you'll want to print in colour. It's not helped by the fact that the default drivers don't look at the print job to see if any colour is actually present.

Without sitting down with a Tiger machine to see if the problem has been fixed at the OS level, we'll just have to try a couple of workarounds.

We might be able to change the PPD (Postscript Printer Description) file, which describes to the OS driver what the capabilities of the printer are. The PPD should be located in /Library/Printers/PPDs/Contents/Resources/en.lproj — assuming we're talking about the same printer, I opened the "FX Document Centre C400 PS" file (there are Document Centre, DocuColor and DocuCentre printers which might be DC).

Inside that file is a section that looks like this:

```
*OpenUI
*FXColorMode/Output
Color:PickOne
*OrderDependency: 20.0
AnySetup *FXColorMode
*DefaultFXColorMode:
Color
*FXColorMode
Color/Color: "
1 dict dup
/ProcessColorModel
/DeviceCMYK put
setpagedevice "
*End
*FXColorMode
Black/Black: "
1 dict dup
/ProcessColorModel
```

```
/DeviceGray put
setpagedevice "
*End
```

That's where the PPD describes how to handle to two colour modes, Color and Black — but, if you look closely, you'll also find the default mode is declared there. In this case, Color.

If you change that line to read as follows:

```
*DefaultFXColorMode:
Black
```

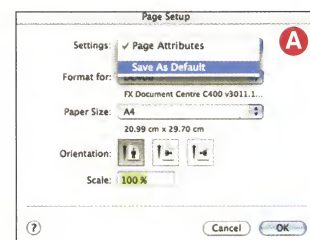
You'll then have a PPD that says that Black is the default mode.

You have two choices at this point: you can just Save the PPD as is, replacing the existing PPD, or you can Save As and have two PPDs — one for colour and one for black and white.

What you could do with two PPDs is add the printer again, this time choosing the Black PPD (choose Other as the printer model when adding the printer, and navigate to /Library/Printers/PPDs/Contents/Resources/en.lproj to find the PPD). You can then print to that new printer and its default mode will be black, while the existing printer's default will be colour.

As for the paper size, you may need to select one of the two DC400 printers in the Page Setup, then choose Save As Default **A** — this should then make the DC400 paper sizes available at all times. If it's set to Any printer, only the common, built-in page sizes are generally available.

If any or all of this doesn't work, it could be worthwhile testing it all with a Tiger machine to see if the latest and greatest from Cupertino would help you out.



Unusually Slow Bus

3

■ I have a G4 eMac (800MHz), which runs Mac OS X v10.3.9, connected via USB to an external hard disk (a LaCie F.A.Porsche 160GB). I also own an iBook G4 (1.33GHz) running Mac OS X v10.4.7.

Data transfer speed from my notebook to the external HD is satisfactory but from the eMac to the external HD the transfer

speed is very slow. Can I do something about it and if yes, what?

*Richard Paschke
Harrietteville, Vic*

The most likely cause of your problem, Richard, is differing USB versions on the two machines.

USB v1.1 supports 12 megabits per second (Mbps), while USB v2.0 supports 480Mbps (see "Hot links"). I did a quick check of the Apple Specifications database and found details for the iBook and the eMac (see "Hot links").

For USB v2.0 ports, Apple explicitly lists them as USB v2.0 ports in the iBook specs, while

for USB v1.1 ports, Apple lists them as "USB ports" (no version number), as on the eMac's spec page.

So, as you can see, the iBook can theoretically handle speeds up to 40 times faster than the eMac, which you are seeing in real life. Unfortunately, there's no way to increase the speed of the USB on the eMac.

The only real option you have is to get a FireWire-capable case for your hard disk — both machines support the 400Mbps FireWire 400 standard, and I tend to find that FireWire 400 is faster than the theoretically faster USB v2.0 spec (your mileage may vary).

Finish for me

Microsoft Reader tip

■ I discovered a great feature in Mail by accident that seems to exist in several of the "core" programs in Mac OS X, such as Mail, iWeb and TextEdit, and other areas where you'd enter lots of text. Start typing a word, and before you finish the word, hit escape. If the application supports it, it'll pop up an instant menu showing a list of words you could use to complete what you've started to type. It's a great timesaver and a fairly nifty little auto-spelling check all in one.

*Preston de Guise
Springfield NSW*

Each month, Microsoft gives a free Notebook Optical Mouse valued at \$70 to the Australian Macworld reader who submits the best tip. Sized for mobility and designed to be noticed, Microsoft Notebook Optical Mouse 3000 offers great comfort for either hand and is always good to go. E-mail your tip, together with your name, address and phone number, to matthew.powell@niche.com.au. All reader tips published become the sole

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Beginners start here

Keychain basics

Every Mac OS X user will see a message at one time or another about the Keychain, and many users don't really understand what it's about.

At its most basic level, the Keychain is a password-storage facility built-in to Mac OS X. It's not good security practice to use the same password everywhere, but that of course means we end up with a plethora of passwords to remember (or store somewhere).

What the Keychain application does is store all of these disparate passwords for you so you don't have to remember them, and all you need to remember to access them is a single password, which then unlocks the Keychain.

Each user on a machine gets their own Keychain, and there are also System level Keychains for items like AirPort network



passwords which are needed by all users.

By default, each user's Keychain is unlocked as the user is logged in (including auto-login). It remains unlocked until the user logs out — this gives the system access to your passwords for the duration of your login session. By default, the user's Keychain password is set to the user's login password.

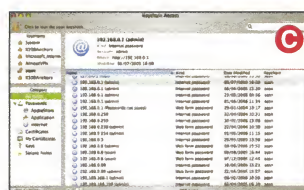
When you enter a username and password in an area that the OS recognises as a username/password-type area, you'll be prompted if you want to save the password A. Sometimes there will be a little checkbox to save or remember the password B. If you choose to save the password, an entry is added to your Keychain so you don't have to remember that password ever again.

You can look at your Keychain entries by opening

the Keychain Access application from the Utilities folder in the Applications folder

C — this utility allows you to change the settings for your Keychain/s, create new Keychains, create, edit and delete entries within Keychains and view passwords and other information stored in your Keychain.

Next month we'll look at some of the little-used features of Keychains and the Keychain Access program that make your Mac more useful and secure.



Attachment issues

4

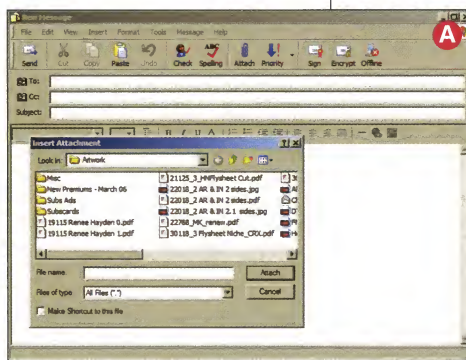
■ I have a recurring problem when sending attachments. As far as I can tell it only applies to PC users. It certainly didn't occur when I sent test files to myself.

I use a G3 iMac running system OS X 10.4.3 and Mail 2.0.5. When sending a JPEG image attachment the recipient advised that the image was in the body of the e-mail and therefore difficult to access. It didn't show up as an attached file that could be easily opened. I've tried to "Fix the file name" and "Check your

encoding", as mentioned in the 08.2006 edition of AMW without success.

The problem is not consistent as I've successfully sent a large number of image attachments to PC users, the majority of them JPEG. In the current instance I've been specifically asked to send the attachments as JPEG.

Mauri Thomas
Bellingen, NSW

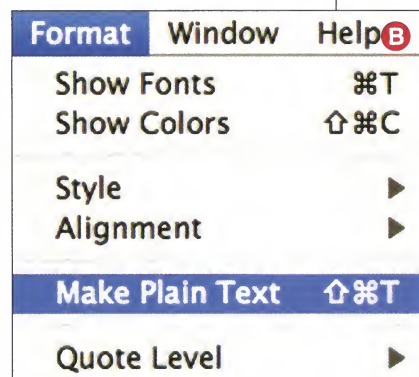


The display of attachments inline shouldn't preclude the recipient from saving the attachment. Perhaps there's a "Save Attachments" item (as there is in Outlook Express and Outlook on the PC) **A** in their File menu that will help them out. However, if that seems like too much

trouble for them, or if it doesn't work, there are a couple of things to try on the Mac side. First, compose the message as plain text — this should preclude the

image from being inline on the receiving machine. Just choose Make Plain Text from the Format menu **B** in Mail before you send the message.

If that doesn't help, you may want to try Mail Attachments Iconizer (see "Hot links"), a shareware plug-in for Mail which stops the inline display of attachments on the Mac — not sure if it will have the desired effect on the receiving PC, but it's certainly worth a try.



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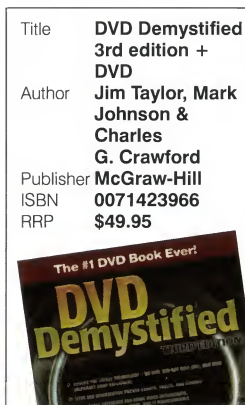
Versatile discs

DVD Demystified + DVD is an industrial-strength reference encyclopaedia, now completely up to date with the publication of its third edition. Since version two was reviewed in these pages DVD burners, players and discs have followed Moore's Law (more or less) and spiralled down in cost while muscling up on features. A host of new formats are jostling on the horizon to become the new standard and the technology is extending its reach into homes, schools and businesses. All of this is covered in this latest edition, which the authors aim at a wide range of people: entertainment professionals, multimedia developers, teachers and trainers, IT professionals and analysts, filmmakers and musicians. And "technovideoaudiophiles". Work that one out.

The opening chapters set DVD technology in its historical context, discussing the technical features of the new medium in broad terms and detailing the advantages of DVD over pre-existing technologies. An overview of the various formats introduces HD-DVD, Blu-ray Disc, Microsoft WMV-HD and others before an itemised technical analysis of Red and Blue Laser physical disc formats and the application details of each. Hints for setting up your DVD system for optimum performance precede a lighter chapter, which debunks some of the common DVD myths: "DVD is better because it is digital"; "DVD crops widescreen movies"; "Dolby Digital means 5.1 channels."

This is not an uncritical acclamation of DVD. A section called "What's Wrong with DVD" covers a range of inadequacies, particularly in the new formats. Then, back on the positive side, there's a look at the possibility of new levels of interactivity and the impact these might have in business, education and in the home. A chapter on the use of DVD technology on computers is followed by a detailed analysis of all aspects of DVD production, from concept design to distribution.

The last chapter subjects market predictions for DVD drives and players made in 1996 to a reality check in 2000 and forecasts made in 2000 to a reality check in 2005. Interesting reading, and probably constraining the latest round of predictions to somewhat more realistic claims. Appendices contain reference data, DVD standards, information sources and a very useful glossary. There are so many figures and tables in the book that they get their own index. In a book crammed full of technical detail this works well. On the accompanying DVD you'll find interviews with industry luminaries, a primer on the production process, demos highlighting the various features of DVD, movie trailers and tests for audio and video.



Hot Links

www.dvddemystified.com
DVD Demystified
www.missingmanuals.com
David Pogue's essential series

Given the wide audience it seeks, the book does a very good job. A lot of DVD stuff is unavoidably technical and while the authors don't shy away from this, they keep ordinary people in the picture with good use of tables and figures. It's not the sort of book you'd read from cover to cover, but in combination with the broad range of material on the disk there's something for everyone, from the experienced tech head to the curious beginner. If you're already into DVD or you suspect you'll need to be, *DVD Demystified* does what it says.

iMovie 6 and iDVD The Missing Manual by David Pogue and Erica Sadun is a similar update of an old favourite. As in previous editions, David starts before the beginning: helping you with the purchase of a camera that suits your needs and then quickly showing you how to use it to the best advantage. A crash course in film techniques covers shot selection, microphone use, camera handling, lighting and composition. And then he moves quickly through the special requirements of filming interviews, weddings, sports and in other special settings.

Now you're ready to bring your clips into iMovie, trim them and arrange them in the timeline to build your story. Then learn how to use transitions and special effects with taste and restraint and add titles, captions and credits. Next are narration, music and sound, which you will then learn how to adjust and optimise.



See how stills can add extra flavour to your movie — especially when brought to life with the Ken Burns effect. Finished? Not quite. David can't let you go public before a quick tour of some classic movie editing techniques. Then publish your finished movie in various QuickTime formats for the web, your iPod, or your phone. Or for iDVD, which is where Erica comes in.

You have the choice either to let iDVD do all the work for you or to build your own project by hand. In the latter case Erica will show you how to customise iDVD themes with your own backgrounds, buttons and audio. This short section closes with some inside information on using iDVD to produce DVD-ROM discs, AppleScript in iDVD and using disk images to save projects. Appendices include iMovie 6 menu by menu and a troubleshooting guide.

At 500 pages, profusely illustrated in colour, the book will save you hours of trial and error learning and help you get the most out of what has evolved into a very sophisticated software duet.

Keith has been a Mac addict since 1984 and still can't fathom why there is anyone who isn't.

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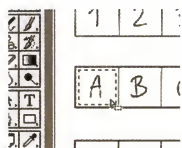
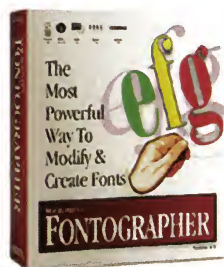


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Adobe® Audition	\$165	Adobe® Indesign® CS	\$307	DiskWarrior	\$ 88	Macromedia® Studio 8	P.O.A
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Adobe® Creative Suite 2 Pr from PS	\$1219	Adobe® Streamline	\$165	Macromedia® Contribute	\$132	Pitstop Pro	\$299
Adobe® Creative Suite 2 Pr from CS1	\$899	Adobe® Type Manager Del OS9 Mac	\$119	Macromedia® Director (from 8.5+)	\$599	QX Tools Pro	\$195
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Flawed	★★
Unacceptable	★
Dangerous	●

AMW lab: surround speakers

Sounds right

THE speakers inside your computer were never designed for high fidelity. The engineers who designed the early computers only needed something to produce an occasional bleep to remind you of your mistakes, or a chime to announce the arrival of e-mail, in the days when spam only came in cans. Then we started playing music, watching videos, and playing games on our Macs. Better sound was urgently needed.

It's fairly obvious that the sound quality you can expect from the built-in speakers in any Macintosh is likely to be well below the expectations of either movie directors or game designers. Both those entertainment genres now expect their customers to be seated in a surround-sound environment, and the music industry is rapidly moving to the same beat. A quick visit to the local hi-fi shop will soon convince you the price you paid for your Macintosh wasn't so exorbitant after all, when compared with the prices of surround-sound systems.

To the rescue came the computer accessory makers, with brands like Creative Labs and Logitech fairly well known amongst computer users for add-on sound cards and external speakers which, while still tiny, were massively larger than those inside the Mac. Soon enough the makers of hi-fi speakers decided to claim a share of this new market and famous brands such as Altec Lansing and Klipsch entered the designed-for-computers fray. Hi-fi vendor Bose had already started making speakers that would fit on the desk, primarily to appease interior designers who wanted to escape the tyranny of working outwards from the huge wooden crates used to house serious speaker systems.

Although probably not the first, Bose became the most famous advocate of tiny speakers augmented with a single much larger bass speaker, which became known as the sub-woofer in surround-sound parlance. When AMW Lab went hunting for surround speakers for this review, we discovered they all followed the Bose philosophy of plonking one larger speaker on the floor somewhere, and scattering smaller speakers around the room. In fact, several vendors now offer seven speakers to surround your Macintosh, but as yet there is limited material available to take advantage of the extra channels. For this review we looked only at 5.1-channel systems — five speakers and one sub-woofer.

To your ears. Reviewing speakers is by necessity extremely subjective, because humans all have slightly different ears, and those ears evolve constantly from cradle to grave, losing their ability to distinguish the higher frequencies as we age. If you've ever wondered why the stereo at grandma's always sounds shrill it's probably because the old girl needs to boost those frequencies

Test drive.

We evaluate, rigorously test and give detailed assessments of new-release software and hardware.

Creative I-Trigue 5600



	Logitech Z-5450	Altec Lansing GT5051R	Laser SPK-51	Jaton AV-318
■ Type	Desktop surround speakers			
■ Rating	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★
■ Pros	Wireless rear speakers, full 5.1 DTS decoding, thundering bass	Good surround emulation, excellent midrange, wireless remote	Wireless remote, multi-angle speakers	Hi-fi style banana jacks for speakers, good bass
■ Cons	Rear speakers need 240V socket, pricey	Locating sounds less precise when gaming	Multi-angle speakers	No remote
■ SRP	\$799	\$199	\$150	\$249
■ Distributor	Logitech Australia Computer Peripherals 02 9972 3711	Audion Australia 03 9817 7799	Laser Corp 02 9889 3388	Jaton Technology 03 9873 3999
■ Reviewer	Ian Yates			
■ Hot links	www.logitech.com/index.cfm/AU/EN		www.laserco.com.au	www.jaton.com.au



Logitech Z-5450



Jaton AV-318

— not necessarily because she's a fan of disco falsetto with accompanying high-hat and snare drum. It is possible to test speakers using a white (or pink) noise generator and a spectrum analyser, but that won't tell you how they "sound".

One thing you should not believe about speakers is that size doesn't matter. The laws of physics prevent tiny speakers from producing the full spectrum of audio at the same sound pressure level, which is why you'll find an array of different-sized speakers in the best hi-fi gear. However, the laws of physics can appear to be defeated by the judicious use of frequency-equalised amplification. When surrounded by any of the systems in this review, it's easy to forget what's missing from the sound stage, until you flick the switch and transfer the signal to a set of floor-standing home theatre speakers.

What's really missing from the systems we reviewed are the mid-range frequencies, and that magic referred to as "presence" in hi-fi circles. However, very few people would miss them enough to spend the same amount of cash on speakers for the computer room as they've already invested in the lounge room, and the softer mid-range isn't as noticeable in movies and games as it is when listening to music. Most movies ask your sound system for clearly audible dialogue, which tiny speakers can easily manage, and thundering special effects, which sub-woofers are designed to deliver.

The next thing you will notice is that most Macintoshes don't have 5.1 surround-sound sockets on the back panel. You can still get a surround-sound effect from the standard stereo output

socket, but true surround sound requires another visit to the accessory shop. AMW Lab borrowed a Revelation 5.1 sound card from M-Audio, which retails for \$199, and installed it in the lab Power Mac. The included software includes profiles for hundreds of speaker systems, making it easy to tweak the sound to fill any gaps. To connect everything together we used cables from Belkin's Pure-AV line.

The contenders. AMW Lab looked at 5.1 speaker systems from Creative Labs, Edifier, Jaton, Laser and Logitech, and a 3.1 system from Altec Lansing.

Although Altec Lansing also makes 5.1 systems, we were keen to try a couple of systems that save the hassle of running speaker wires to the back of the room. The Altec Lansing GT5051R has side-facing speakers grafted into the front speakers, which are designed to bounce off the walls and provide the illusion of rear-emanating surround sound, which they did surprisingly well, but not quite so well when playing games. This trick only works with hard walls, so if yours are carpeted or curtained you won't get the effect you want. For music listening this compact system came closest to matching a set of floor-standing speakers.

The Logitech Z-5450 solves the problem of cabling the rear speakers by making them wireless. However, the rear speakers still need wires to supply 240V AC, and unless you have a surfeit of power outlets you might still be in for a cabling exercise. Logitech also makes standard 5.1 speaker sets, at a much lower price than the \$799 asked for the wireless version. However, you also get

Edifier M1500	Creative I-Trigue 5600
🔊 1/2	🔊 1/2
Compact, low price	Wired remote with aux input, good highs and bass
Small sub-woofer	Poor midrange and presence
\$90	\$300
Audion Australia 03 9817 7799	Creative Labs 02 9021 9800

www.audion-mm.com
www.au.creative.com


Laser SPK-51

true surround-sound decoding inside the Logitech Z-5450, making it the only one on test with an input for optical audio cable, found on the back of most standalone DVD players. Clearly the Z-5450 is designed as a total mini hi-fi replacement, at which it does a remarkably good job, with no shortage of floor-shaking bass.

The Creative Labs I-Trigue 5600 get the prize for funkiest looking speakers, but the maker's claims that three one-inch dome tweeters, housed in clever acoustic housings, can sound as good as one three-inch speaker weren't confirmed by AMW Lab's testing ears. The sound was certainly clear, and the bass was adequate, making them suitable for DVDs and gaming, but lacking presence for music listening. The Edifier M1500 produced a similar sound albeit with slightly less thundering bass, but for less than half the price.

The Jatón AV-318 will appeal to hi-fi enthusiasts with its standard banana-jack speaker connectors, and roll of speaker wire for you to cut and strip to suit your listening environment. This also means you can replace the front satellite speakers with larger units that you may have handy, if you want better mid-range. The sub-woofer is solid and thunders when asked.

Laser Corp most closely follows the Bose design philosophy with its SPK-51 speaker set. Each satellite has three speakers, which can be individually rotated slightly to spread the sound even further around the room. Playing with the angles can produce a truly immersive sound, best for listening to live music, but you can also find yourself endlessly fiddling instead of listening. For gaming and movie-watching, the speakers are best



Altec Lansing GT5051R

when all three are aligned straight ahead. Moderately thunderous bass emanates from the sub-woofer.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you can hear speakers in action before you buy, you will be less disappointed when you get them home, and for that reason, AMW Lab recommends a visit to a shop which offers this facility, or several visits to friends who have already made their purchase. If you can't find a suitable place for a personal listening test, your choice comes down to function and price. For the best all-round sound, AMW Lab found the Altec Lansing GT-5051R closest to the full-size hi-fi in the lab lounge room.

Next closest were the trio of Jatón, Laser and Logitech, with the Logitech being the best choice for a complete hi-fi replacement exercise. If all you really want is a better gaming experience without blowing the budget, the Edifier M1500 is hard to ignore. If you need to keep the interior decorator happy as well, Creative Labs' I-Trigue 5600 would even look good on the bridge of the USS Enterprise. If you plan to listen to these systems while not seated in front of your Macintosh, the wireless remotes included with the Altec Lansing, Logitech and Laser systems will make life a little comfier on the couch. 🖱️

Edifier M1500



■ Type	Pro desktop computer
■ Rating	★★★★
■ Pros	Fast processors; good game frame-rate performance; huge memory capacity; additional ports on front and back
■ Cons	Pricy, rare RAM format; limited performance gains in software not optimised for multi-core systems; non-native software (notably Adobe Creative Suite) must be translated via Rosetta; lack of a sub-\$2,000 entry-level model
■ RRP	\$3999 for basic configuration, but massively customisable
■ Manufacturer	Apple Computer
■ Distributor	Apple Australia 133 622
■ Reviewer	Jason Snell
■ Hot links	www.apple.com/au/macpro

2.66GHz Mac Pro

*Great performance
— with the right software*

FOR Apple, the release of the Mac Pro line of high-end desktop Macs marks the end of its transition to Intel processors. The Mac Pro excels at the tasks you'd expect for a system targeted at the high-end professional market: computation-intensive, heavily multithreaded tasks such as 3D rendering, scientific computing, and professional audio and video production. That makes these systems just about the best high-performance workstations money can buy — and potentially overkill for people who aren't working in one of those fields.

The Mac Pro also arrives in a world of software that's still in flux. Graphics professionals who rely on Adobe's Creative Suite of applications won't be able to run them natively on the Mac Pro until next year, and most Mac software still isn't able to take advantage of the four processor cores that power these machines.

Generation pro. Although the Mac Pro doesn't share the name of its predecessor, the Power Mac G5, it does share the same aluminium skin. While Apple's left the external design alone, it's addressed the G5 line's greatest shortcomings with the Mac Pro.

The Power Mac G5's internal design was dictated by the need to cool the super-hot G5 processors. As a result, even though the G5's internal volume was much larger than the Power Mac G4's, it was a step back when it came to storage, offering space for only two drives. Thanks to the Mac Pro's dramatically cooler Intel Xeon processors, Apple's been able to reclaim space from the cooling system and contribute it toward internal storage.

The Mac Pro can hold four Serial ATA (SATA) drives, up from the G5's maximum of two. It's easy to install a new drive in a Mac Pro: just slide out an empty drive housing (the Mac Pro ships with four housings, even if you buy only one internal drive), attach a SATA drive to it with four included screws, and slide the drive back into the Mac Pro. The drives attach directly to the Mac Pro's motherboard, so you don't need to fiddle with cables.

Also hearkening back to the last generation of Power Mac G4 systems, the Mac Pro's optical drive bay has room for two full-sized optical drives. Although this seems a bit excessive today, the choice



makes a bit more sense when you consider that we're on the cusp of a whole new generation of optical drives in the form of the high-capacity HD-DVD and Blu-ray formats. During the introduction of DVD burners, it was useful to have both a state-of-the-art CD burner and a newfangled DVD drive, and I expect the same to hold true during the transition to these new optical formats.

With the G5, Apple finally gave Mac users easy-to-access USB, FireWire, and headphone ports on the front of the case. Proving that there's never enough of a good thing, the Mac Pro increases that number from two to four: There are now two USB 2.0 ports on the front, and one each of FireWire 400 and 800. There are three additional USB 2.0 ports on the back, giving the Mac Pro a total of five USB 2.0 and four FireWire ports. That cheer you hear is coming from all the Power Mac G5 users who are tired of plugging and unplugging (and most definitely not from the makers of USB hubs).

Invaders from planet Xeon. Of course, the Mac Pro's most radical departure from its Power Mac G5 forebears is in the chip that powers it. Each Mac Pro uses two dual-core Intel Xeon 5100 series processors, meaning that every Mac Pro has four processor cores. Whereas the Power Mac G5 offered a single quad-core configuration, the Mac Pro line offers three, featuring Xeon processors running at 2.0GHz, 2.66GHz, and 3.0GHz. To speed processing, each Xeon chip also has 4MB of Level 2 cache.

When it comes to processors, using a lot of energy and generating heat go hand in hand — and these Xeons use less power and throw off less heat than the G5 chips. The Mac Pro has four fans (down from nine fans plus a liquid cooling system in the G5), and they run much quieter than the fans on the G5. On my Power Mac G5, kicking a processor-intensive job into high gear (encoding a video, for example) would immediately result in an audible crank-up of the computer's fans. The Mac Pro, in contrast, remains remarkably quiet even during heavy use. All the sounds I noticed emanating from the Mac Pro were from three SATA drives, not cooling fans.

When we used an ammeter to test the power usage of the 2.66GHz Mac Pro against the Power Mac G5 Quad, we found that the Mac Pro definitely used less energy. The G5 used 92 percent more power when starting up, 88 percent more when running an Unreal Tournament 2004 demo, 62 percent more when idle, and 242 percent more when sleeping.

And of course, the presence of Intel-based processors in the Mac Pro means that it can run Windows, too. At press time, Apple's Boot Camp would run on the Mac Pro, but without several native device drivers. Although you can download many drivers from third-party sources, Apple will likely update Boot Camp to include Mac Pro drivers soon. Just prior to press time, Parallels released an update to Parallels Desktop to support the Mac Pro.

Juggling cores. When it comes to sheer speed, it's easy to look at Macworld Lab's test results and declare that the 2.66GHz Mac Pro is the fastest Mac yet (until, that is, we test its 3GHz variation) — it scored a record 299 on our Speedmark 4.5 test suite. The Intel era of Mac computing has made making such declarations problematic at best.

First, there's the issue of Rosetta performance. Software that hasn't been recompiled to run natively on Intel-based Macs must run in Apple's Rosetta code-translation layer, and everything slows down when Rosetta dynamically translates PowerPC commands into Intel equivalents. As a result, the Mac Pros are the first high-end Macs ever to run Adobe Photoshop slower than their predecessors — because Photoshop (and indeed, Adobe's entire Creative Suite) currently must use run Rosetta in order to run on Intel Macs. (The 2.66GHz Mac Pro actually ran our suite of Photoshop tasks [see benchmark chart] at almost exactly the same speed as a Power Mac G4 1.42 GHz dual-processor system.

Professionals whose primary applications run natively on Intel Macs — QuarkXPress 7, Final Cut Studio, Shake 4, Cinema 4D XL, and the like — will find that even the 2.66GHz Mac Pro tops the previous Mac speed champ at every turn when running native software. If the reason you buy a high-end professional Mac desktop is to run Adobe's applications as fast as possible, though, there's no point in buying a Mac Pro until Adobe's Intel-native software arrives.

The other issue that complicates matters of speed involves the use of multiple processor cores: Software must be written to explicitly take advantage of systems with multiple processors, processors with multiple cores, or (in the case of these systems and the Power Mac G5 Quad) both. Programs take advantage of multiple cores to varying degrees: programs dedicated to 3D rendering, professional audio

and video editing, and science and maths tend to use every last bit of processor power in every available core, while many other programs can use only a single core at a time.

If you rely on a program that's not particularly efficient at using multiple cores, you'll gain much less from the four cores that the Mac Pro provides. For example, when I used QuickTime Pro to convert a video for use on the iPod, it took advantage of only one processor core. (How to use that leftover power? I just started three other video-compression tasks simultaneously, each of them using one core each.) Even Apple's pro-level Compressor utility was inefficient while compressing video — during a Compressor job, at least half of the Mac Pro's processor power remained idle.

It's not the Mac Pro's fault that there are relatively few programs that can take advantage of its massive processing power. As with the Power Mac G5 Quad, the advantage you get out of the Mac Pro will have a lot to do with how efficient your favourite software is at taking advantage of multiple processor cores. If you rely mostly on programs that aren't efficient at using multiple processor cores, you'll waste a large chunk of the Mac Pro's processing potential.

New RAM and decent video. The Mac Pro's RAM is unlike any other memory seen in the Mac market before. The modules are called Fully Buffered DIMMS (or FB-DIMMs), a format spearheaded by Intel that offers high memory performance — at high prices. Each FB-DIMM has its own memory controller onboard, which generates extra heat. To dissipate that heat, each FB-DIMM in a Mac Pro comes with its own heat sink, making FB-DIMMs look unique. FB-DIMMs must be installed in pairs, and for the highest memory performance gains, a Mac Pro should have at least two pairs of FB-DIMMs installed.

FB-DIMMs are new technology, and as a result shopping for FB-DIMMs will be difficult, at least in the near future. Apart from Apple, there are currently very few companies offering Mac Pro-compatible RAM modules. And the modules may be significantly more costly than other, more common RAM types, at least for a while. Here's the good news: if you need huge amounts of RAM, the Mac Pro will accommodate: you can fill its eight RAM slots with as much as 16GB of RAM.

Installing RAM in the Mac Pro is much easier than on the Power Mac G5. The Mac Pro has two RAM carrier cards, each with four slots. To install RAM, you just slide the card out, place it on a table (the card has plastic feet on its back side), and insert your new FB-DIMMs. Then the carrier card slides back in, right into its slot on the Mac Pro motherboard.





With its combination of fast processors and decent video card, the Mac Pro provided the highest game frame-rates of any stock Mac system we've tested. When powered by the standard Nvidia GeForce 7300 GT card with 256MB of RAM – a card not generally appreciated by die-hard gamers – our Unreal Tournament 2004 test managed to outdo the G5 Quad by 64 percent. We saw similar results for Doom 3 and Quake 4. (We were unable to acquire the Mac Pro's two other video card options – the ATI Radeon X1900 XT and the Nvidia Quadro FX 4500 – in time for this review.)

The Mac Pro, like the Power Mac G5, uses PCI Express slots. Apple has made a few improvements this time around. First, the bottom PCI slot is double-wide, since many high-performance video cards are, shall we say, a bit rotund. If you place a porky video card in a standard slot, it covers up the slot next to it. With the double-wide slot, there's plenty of room. More interestingly,

these slots can be individually configured for different maximum speeds: When you buy a card, you no longer need to figure out a strategy to use all your slots. The first time you start up the Mac Pro after installing a card, a software assistant lets you configure your PCI slots, channelling speed to the right cards (and removing it from cards that don't need as much bandwidth).

A million to one. For the last few years, Apple has offered several (usually three) configurations within the Power Mac line. The lowest-priced model tended to use technology held over from the previous generation of Power Macs, often with a slower system bus and lacking certain upgrade options. With the Mac Pro, Apple has done away with these distinctions: although

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there's one Apple-designated standard configuration, you can customise every aspect of the Mac Pro regardless of the speed of the processors inside.

There are both good and bad points to this approach. Since so many Mac Pros are destined for very specific tasks, it's fitting that they be completely customisable. That way buyers who want only the lower-cost dual-2GHz processors won't be stuck with last-generation technology. They will be free to outfit their system as they choose, and will still be able to take advantage of four processor cores. And, every Mac Pro can drive Apple's mammoth 30-inch Cinema HD Display.

On the other hand, the bargain-priced Power Mac towers did provide users an affordable way to buy an expandable, customisable Mac system. If you strip the Mac Pro down to bare bones from Apple's online store, you still can't buy one for less than \$3,380. (And since wireless networking is not a standard part of the Mac Pro, unlike every other Mac sold today, that means you'll need to spend \$129 extra if you want to add AirPort Extreme and Bluetooth to any model, not just the stripped-down one.)

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The Mac Pro gives professional Mac users more processor power, storage options, and external ports than the previous Power Mac line. The Mac Pro is a better value, too: the base configuration Mac Pro, which runs at 2.66 GHz, costs less than the Power Mac G5 Quad did upon its release — yet the Mac Pro is generally faster than the G5 Quad. And the 3.0GHz Mac Pro threatens to blow past all previous Mac performance scores.

These new systems aren't for everyone. If you rely heavily on applications (such as the Adobe Creative Suite) that do not yet run natively on Intel Macs, the Mac Pro systems shouldn't replace your Power Mac G5 just yet. And if the software you use isn't efficient at using multiple processor cores, you won't be able to take full advantage of the Mac Pro's impressive processing power.

If you don't run high-end professional applications and don't truly need a huge amount of internal storage or access to PCI Express slots (for the impressive video-card options, among other things), you might find that the remarkably powerful 20-inch iMac Core 2 Duo is much better value. 

Mac Pro 2.66GHz

	Speedmark 4.5	Adobe Photoshop CS2	Cinema 4DXL 9.5.21	Compressor 2.1	iMovie 6.0.1	iTunes 6.0.4	Unreal Tournament 2004	Finder
	OVERALL SCORE	SUITE	RENDER	MPEG-2 Encode	AGED EFFECT	MP3 ENCODE	FRAME RATE	ZIP ARCHIVE
Mac Pro/2.66GHz (Standard)	299	1:25	0:28	1:47	0:38	0:48	91.3	2:01
Power Mac G5/2.5GHz quad-core	262	0:45	0:30	1:52	0:39	0:43	62.2	2:22
Power Mac G5/2.7GHz dual-processor	267	0:48	0:52	2:17	0:43	0:46	44.3	2:15
Power Mac G4/1.42GHz dual-processor	155	1:24	2:23	4:43	1:24	1:35	26.5	3:16
20-inch iMac Core Duo/2GHz	210	2:31	1:11	3:21	1:03	1:26	54.1	2:34
	>Better	<Better	<Better	<Better	<Better	<Better	>Better	<Better

Best results in **bold**. Reference systems in *italics*.

How we tested: Speedmark 4.5 scores are relative to those of a 1.25GHz Mac mini, which is assigned a score of 100. Adobe Photoshop, Cinema 4D XL, Compressor 2.1, iMovie, iTunes, and Finder scores are in minutes:seconds. All systems were running Mac OS X 10.4.7 with 1GB of RAM, with processor performance set to Highest in the Energy Saver preference pane when applicable. We used the Mac Pro Standard Configuration with two dual core 2.66GHz Xeon processors, a 250GB hard drive, and the Nvidia GeForce 7300 GT graphics card. The Photoshop Suite test is a set of 14 scripted tasks using a 50MB file. Photoshop's memory was set to 70 percent and History was set to Minimum. We recorded how long it took to render a scene in Cinema 4D XL. We used Compressor to encode a DV file that was 6 minutes and 26 seconds long using the DVD: Fastest Encode 120 minutes - 4:3 setting. In iMovie, we applied the Aged video effect to a 1-minute movie. We converted 45 minutes of AAC audio files to MP3 using iTunes' High Quality setting. We used Unreal Tournament 2004's Antalus Botmatch average-frames-per-second score; we tested at a resolution of 1,024 by 768 pixels at the Maximum setting with both audio and graphics enabled. We created a Zip archive in the Finder from a 1GB folder. — Macworld Lab testing by James Galbraith and Jerry Jung

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■ Type	Musical instrument interface
■ Rating	★★★★
■ Pros	Large screen; easy to hook up; many output options; very good crunch amp simulation
■ Cons	Some sounds seem too processed; lack of a Save button makes editing less convenient
■ OS X	10.3 or later
■ RRP	\$499; pedal board accessory \$119
■ Manufacturer	M-Audio
■ Distributor	PowerMove 03 9464 4999 or Electric factory 03 9480 5988
■ Reviewer	Jim Dalrymple
■ Hot links	www.m-audio.com

M-Audio Black Box

Gives guitar players a large array of sounds

The choices for guitar players willing to take the plunge into the digital world of effects and amps are increasing each year. M-Audio's entry into this market fits snugly between computer software and larger, less mobile stomp box (effects pedal) devices. The Black Box is a hardware device that provides guitar amp and effects simulation. It allows guitar players to play through a variety of simulated amplifiers and add an almost endless array of custom effects.

There is a lot to like about the Black Box — especially its seamless integration with your instruments and the Mac, its ease of use, and the variety of effects you can obtain by using it. With its USB connection to the computer, the Black Box was easily recognised by all of the software applications I used with it, including Logic Pro 7, Cubase SX 3, and GarageBand 3. The Black Box also comes with a control panel that allows users to upload and download presets, as well as an interface to update the firmware.

The unit comes with a variety of connection methods making it a snap to connect to an instrument and then hook up to the computer or other output device: It has a 1/4-inch guitar input, a 1/4-inch headphone jack, balanced 1/4-inch outputs, a S/PDIF (Sony/Philips Digital Interface Format) digital output, an expression pedal jack (for plugging in your favorite effects pedal), and a dynamic mic input.

It also has the largest screen of any guitar-related device I've ever used, making it very easy to see what you are doing. The screen focuses on three main items — the preset number, the amp type (for example Plexi) and the effects status (on or off). The large screen comes in really handy when you are editing presets. While editing, for example, you can see clearly what effect you

are adding or adjusting. Plus, you get a live sound preview while you are working with the effects.

A recent firmware update for the device made a huge difference in the operation and functionality of the product. When I first starting using the Black Box, I thought it was good, but very limited — it featured 12 amp models and many effects, but it still wasn't enough to get the tone I really wanted.

The firmware update boosted the number of amps from 12 to 40 and added reverbs, compression, and new modulation options, for a total of 121 effects. The additions are compelling — the new amps included some staples of rock music like the Fender Deluxe Reverb, Marshall JCM 800, Roland Jazz Chorus, and Peavey 616 MKII.

While some of the effects sound more processed than I would like, the majority of the effects like Chorus and Flanger hit the mark. I was very impressed by the JCM 800 amp model — I expect one of these amps to deliver crunch, and a lot of it. This new amp simulation did just that, allowing me to build presets capable of achieving the tone I wanted, complete with a nice sweet spot for pinch harmonics (that squealing sound on the strings) without an unreasonable amount of feedback.

The Black Box has a total of 200 presets — 100 factory set and 100 user-editable. I don't think I would use the majority of the presets for most of the playing and recording that I do, but there were some very nice warm, clean sounds mixed in with the crunchy presets that I played the most. Other presets seemed to focus on strange sounds — but I'm sure these would be right for some musicians.

You can edit the presets directly on the Black Box via a complete

set of buttons and controls — as opposed to editing them on the computer and uploading them to the device when you're done. Scrolling through and editing effects or amp models couldn't be simpler — just click on a button to enter the Edit mode. Saving your changes is a bit more of a challenge because you have to hit two buttons simultaneously. This caused me a few headaches because when I'm editing a preset, I'm also strumming the guitar on my lap so I can hear what

it sounds like. Given the choice, I would much rather

have one dedicated Save button.

The Black Box also has a built-in drum machine that includes 100 factory drum patterns and syncs to tap tempo or an external MIDI clock. As drum machines go, the one included in this device certainly serves its purpose, but if you're looking for something other than a practice pattern, you'll probably want to go with some drum loops from a company like Beta Monkey Music.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. M-Audio's Black Box is a good addition to your collection of guitar based musical effects. It's lightweight and compact enough to take with you on the road, and offers much of the power and options you'd expect from a much larger device. 



■ Type	Project-management utility
■ Rating	★★★★
■ Pros	Excellent interface; complete feature set; easy output/input from iCal and Address Book
■ Cons	Only two templates offered; some instructions poorly translated; projects do not update to iCal automatically
■ OS X	10.3 or later
■ RRP	\$267.18
■ Publisher	Project Wizards
■ Distributor	Nova-Mind
■ Reviewer	Jason Cranford Teague
■ Hot links	www.nova-mind.com/Merlin/

Merlin 1.3.11

No need for wizards

If you have any role in managing a project, good software can mean the difference between smooth sailing and rough seas. Yet project management software is often hard to learn, complex to use, and expensive to run. The standard for project management software is Microsoft's Project, but there is no Mac version available.

Merlin 1.3.11 is project-management software that's not just built for the Mac — it's built for Mac users. It includes all the standard features you'd expect to find, such as resource allocation, budget tracking, multiple schedule tracking views, and to-do lists, as well as document linking and version tracking.

Yes, you Gan.
Check the status of all of your projects at a glance with Merlin's Gantt view.



Once you start a project, Merlin's single-window interface makes it easy to set up your project's specific requirements. Although it would be nice to have more than just the two built-in templates that Merlin provides, you can import projects started in a variety of other applications, including MS Project, and ICS files from iCal. Merlin dovetails nicely with Apple's own Address Book for adding project members, and with iCal for keeping your calendar up-to-date. Unfortunately, once you publish calendars to iCal, the two programs do not automatically communicate updates to each other.

One exceptionally useful feature is Merlin's ability to publish project web sites to .Mac or to WebDAV-enabled servers with a few mouse clicks. A site created in this manner will include not only schedules and team contact information, but also links to all of the associated project documents for easy download.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you are looking for project-management software that takes full advantage of the Mac's capabilities, then look no further than Merlin. 

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	Samson C01U	Blue Snowball
■ Type	USB microphone	
■ Rating	★★★★	★★★★½
■ Pros	Easy USB connection; fully powered by USB; very good sound quality; output customisable via software	Easy USB connection; fully powered by USB; dual-capsule design; good sound quality; sturdy, well-designed stand
■ Cons	Bulky for portable use; cable length limited by USB; doesn't include stand; software not currently Intel-compatible; no stereo support	Bulky for portable use; cable length limited by USB; low output; omni-directional mode still somewhat directional; no software controls; no stereo support
■ OS X	10.2 or later	10.2 or later
■ RRP	Call Electric Factory for price	\$379
■ Manufacturer	Samson	Blue Microphones
■ Distributor	Electric Factory 03 9480 5988	APAC Audio 02 9683 4752
■ Reviewer	Dan Frakes	
■ Hot links	www.samsontech.com	www.bluemic.com

USB microphones

Ease of use for computer-based recording

RECORDING with a high-quality microphone and a computer has traditionally been a messy process involving a mixer or external adapter, and possibly an external pre-amp. Blue Microphones' Snowball USB Microphone and Samson Audio's C01U USB Studio Condenser Mic are unique, mono condenser microphones that make computer recording simple by connecting via USB. Plug one into your Mac's USB port, and your computer will automatically recognise it as a new input device; the USB port provides all the power these microphones need, and no device drivers are necessary. These features make USB microphones ideal for computer-based music recording and podcasting.

You adjust each microphone's levels in the Sound pane of OS X's System Preferences or by using the settings in your recording application, such as GarageBand. However, because these microphones are USB-only, you can't connect them to an analogue mixing board, you can't use traditional microphone cables, and cable length is limited.

The globe-shaped, retro-looking Snowball microphone uses a dual-capsule design that lets you switch between cardioid (directional) and omnidirectional modes. The former is useful for single-person or single-instrument recording, as it picks up sound directly in front of the microphone; the latter is better for recording multiple voices or instruments positioned at any loca-

tion around the microphone. In my testing, the Snowball's omnidirectional mode still favoured sound sources in front of the microphone, but it picked up enough audio from behind to make the Snowball useful for conducting podcast interviews or for other situations where sources are positioned on opposite sides of the microphone. There's also a special cardioid mode – called PAD by Blue – that reduces the Snowball's output when recording loud sources.

The Snowball's overall frequency response is fairly smooth; however, I found the microphone's tonal balance to be a bit bright (tipped slightly toward the higher frequencies), thanks to reduced pickup at the low end. The Snowball's overall output levels were also fairly low. However, Blue recently posted two firmware updates that allow you to adjust the Snowball's output to higher or lower levels; you can use these updaters to switch between the low- and high-output settings – repeatedly, if necessary. (One of the advantages of a USB microphone is the ability to update firmware easily.) The Snowball's output is permanently set to 44.1kHz, 16-bit; and Blue provides no software for customising output.

A two-metre USB cable is included with the Snowball, along with a sturdy, telescoping mini-tripod that allows you to rotate, tilt, and raise the Snowball to optimise the recording position. (The Snowball is also available without stand and USB cable.)

Samson's C01U, based on the company's non-USB C01 microphone, uses a 19mm cardioid diaphragm with a single recording mode. (Samson calls the C01U a hyper-cardioid model, meaning that it is designed to reject even more audio from the sides and rear than a typical cardioid.) Although



this makes the C01U less flexible than the multi-mode Snowball, the Samson's output sounded a bit more balanced than that of the Snowball – the C01U picked up lower frequencies better – and its default output level was significantly higher. The C01U provides 16-bit audio at sample rates of 8, 11.025, 22.05, 44.1, and 48 kHz, as determined by the recording application. In addition, you can use Samson's SoftPre utility, downloadable from the company's web site, to monitor input level (via a VU meter) and to adjust the microphone's gain, invert phase, and enable a high-pass/low-cut filter; the latter can omit all audio below the frequency you choose. These options can significantly improve the quality of your recordings. Unfortunately, at this writing, SoftPre is not a Universal Binary; more important, since SoftPre requires a kernel extension, it can't run under Rosetta, so the options provided by SoftPre are unavailable on Intel Macs.


Included with the C01U is a three-metre USB cable, a thin-fabric carrying pouch, and a plastic stand mount; unless you plan on holding the C01U during use, you'll need to spring for a stand.

Both the hard-plastic Snowball and the die-cast-metal C01U are

likely to stand up to the rigours of travel and long-term use; unfortunately, both are also bulky and heavy – the Snowball is nearly a kilogram with the stand, and the C01U is approximately 500 grams without a stand – making them less than ideal for carrying in a laptop bag.



Australian Macworld's buying advice.

For people who are serious about podcasting, or are looking for a way to record vocals or instruments with their Macs, these USB microphones are worth a look. Neither provides studio-quality results – you'll need a mixer and a higher-end microphone for that – but their convenience and ease of use make them ideal for computer-based recording. The Blue Snowball's dual-capsule design and included stand make it a good choice for recording multiple-source audio, with the option for single-source; the Samson C01U's hyper-directional approach makes it a better option for capturing a single voice or instrument. The C01U's more balanced frequency response and included software also produce recordings of slightly better quality. 

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■ Type	Strategy game
■ Rating	★★★
■ Pros	Easy to learn for a strategy game, but gets challenging as new features are unlocked
■ Cons	OpenGL weirdness; wonky multiplayer
■ OS X	10.3 or later
■ Processor	Universal
■ RRP	\$US39.95
■ Publisher	Freeverse Software
■ Distributor	Available online
■ Reviewer	Peter Cohen
■ Hot links	www.freeverse.com

Legion Arena

Time to kick some Roman butt

WELL-KNOWN Mac game developer Freeverse's first PC port is a conversion of Slitherine's Legion Arena, a real-time strategy game that puts you in command of armies during the time of the Roman Empire.

If you're a fan of History Channel fare about ancient Romans and how they battled to forge the greatest empire of their day, you'll find yourself instantly immersed in this game. Legion Arena puts you alternately in command of Roman and Celtic legions, staging battles, commanding from the field, and improving your legion — both in terms of recruiting new soldiers, equipping the ones you have and training them.

Essentially you're working your way up the ranks, starting as a commander of a few squads of men and cavalry, but nothing else. Thrust into the political intrigues of ancient Rome that unfold through a series of interstitial movies that are narrated by a voice worthy of *I, Claudius*, you gradually gain power and influence as you and your men face ever-greater enemies.

On the battlefield, each of your squads earns experience as they fight. This experience goes toward making them better soldiers and can be parlayed between battles to add new skills. For example, militia can learn dodging and parrying techniques, javelin throwers can become marksmen, and so on.

Your superiors reward you with denarii (money) and fame upon successful completion of a battle. You can trade some of your fame down to replenish your troops when they suffer casualties on the battlefield. And you can spend your money on more troops or better equipment for the ones that you already have — such as boots, helmets, better weapons, and so on.

The game has an incredibly simple point-and-click interface; it takes only a few minutes to learn enough of the basics so that you'll be off and running. (A quick tutorial will help you play through the basics.) Everything is controlled from the screen except for camera movements, which are handled with the mouse.

Once you've outfitted your soldiers (you can even customise the look of their uniforms — a surprisingly handy feature that helps you differentiate newer recruits from seasoned veterans in the heat of battle), you fight. To that end, you're moved to the Deployment Screen, where you can actually position your units on the battlefield and give them orders — charge, advance, hold for a short time, or outflank your opponents.

You'll need to pay close attention to the terrain and your enemy during these times — boggy ground will slow your men down dramatically, for example, while wooded areas may help disguise militia who can then burst forth and surprise the enemy. Over time, as you and your men build skills, you'll unlock new formations and new types of units — heavy infantry, elephants and much more.

Once you're done deploying, you click on the Fight button and watch the battle unfold. Depending on how well you've set up your troops and how well-trained they are, it's possible to be completely passive and just watch the battle play out — but it's better to remain a hands-on leader, commanding your units hither and yon, sending resources where they're needed.

Graphics are acceptable, though I did notice some really peculiar OpenGL-related texturing weirdness when it came to objects like rivers. (As I wrote this review, Freeverse told me it's a glitch in the PC code that the company was waiting for the original developer to fix.) Music and sound effects help set the tone — the score is suitably cinematic and triumphant, and the battlefield sound effects are chock full of men screaming and battling.

Multiplayer capabilities are handled through Freeverse's own Gamesmith online game matching service, which is kind of wonky — you're presented with different chat rooms filled with players for different games, as opposed to being shuttled somewhere specifically for Legion Arena. You can also host your own games on your Local Area Network (LAN) if you want.

Freeverse's local distributor Try and Byte hasn't had the Mac version of Legion Arena rated by the Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC), which is why you can't get the Mac version off the shelf here. It's violent, but more than that, after you unlock the Celts there are "Naked Fanatics" that frighten opposing teams with their ... well, you know. It's not vulgar or obscene; in fact, it's historically accurate, more or less, but it's something to be aware of if buying for the kids.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Just the thing for armchair generals, Legion Arena brings you back to the glory days of the Roman Empire for a good old-fashioned bloodletting.

Rome where you want to. Pay attention to the terrain when you deploy your troops in Legion Arena — boggy ground will slow down your advancing fighters.



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Something to chew on.

By Alex Rieneck.

Humourless gits and the state of the union

REMEMBER, many moons ago, being at a media preview of one of the very first G3 clamshell iBooks. It was a disturbingly advanced machine. It had inbuilt wireless networking and could surf the internet via a new-fangled contraption called AirPort. The laptop had a carry handle. It was classy.

It had its drawbacks though. It had Mac OS 8 point something in it. Worse than that, the case had nasty sharp rough bits on it and, worse even than that, it was a virulent combination of orange and white and the white parts felt rubbery and oddly slug-like. I felt that it would be perfectly suited for a use in a Pythonesque re-enactment of the Battle of Pearl Harbor.

I was experimentally hefting it around when the Apple tech person who was responsible for the machine came up to me out of the throng and asked me what I thought of it. In true Homer Simpson style, I just opened my mouth and blurted out the truth. "It's a good machine," I said, "but if I owned it, I would spray paint it black". I still think those Macs would look good in black. The Apple guy looked at me like I was admitting to raping grandmothers, and snatched the laptop back from me. He stroked it like a kitten. He was serious. He was, as you may have guessed, and further conversation proved, a "Mac Zealot". He was not the first one I ever met and he certainly wasn't the last, but back then he was one of a rare breed because, back then, there were really only Mac Zealots and "Serious Windows-Based Computer Professionals" who had been rendered inert by the power of Windows 95.

In the 21st century things are different. We have all different kinds of zealots, ranging from harmless eccentrics to the out-and-out psychos, all busily grinding their axes to the finest edge possible while sniffing the breeze for the smell of blood. Luckily though, we also have an utterly reliable litmus test to separate the befuddled expert from the dangerous nutjob. It is called the "Sense of Humour Test".

Simply, if they laugh (and not in a demonic, drooling sort of way, mind) they are probably alright. Try this test out yourself. Pick your location and target carefully and say "Linux? It's all just copied from Windows, isn't it?" or "Microsoft has lost the innovative edge to Apple". Or, most fiendishly of all, "What? Apple batteries catch fire too, don't they?"

Then place the responses you get on a scale of your own devising. Lots of people don't have a sense of humour any more. Take this last



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WWDC as an example: right after the opening salvos, out trots Bertrand Serlet, the Special Vice President of Apple Software Engineering. He immediately launches into a diatribe on how the people at Redmond seem to be copying Apple rather than, well, innovating. Monsieur Serlet is French, waves his arms around a lot and delivers his speech in a *broooooaad* French accent. I watched that part of the show screeching with laughter.

The next day, of course, the media responses were mixed and ranged from pompous variations on "couldn't understand his French accent" to turgid and exhaustively itemised discussion of his points. Sadly, few had got the joke. It is pretty simple. Mr Serlet is French. He did almost nothing at the WWDC except taunt Microsoft. It strikes me as obvious that Mr Serlet had been sent out in his guise as the "French Taunter" of Monty Python fame. He taunted. Industrious. All the while Steve Jobs lurked backstage smiling evilly in his guise as Sir Louis De la Rotter. For once, being a journalist outside the walls of Castle Apple was really funny.

As you'd expect, the rest of the WWDC involved Apple catapulting livestock and hard-edged objects over the walls in the general direction of Redmond, Washington. It isn't any less funny because the chickens rarely miss their targets. This whole concept is even funnier now that I think about it, but Castle Apple is completely immune to Trojan rabbits, too.

Mind you, it is worth noticing that with the exception of the Mac Pro line of Intel Xeon and the new xServe boxes, there was nothing in the way of new product to tempt the average consumer, and that while the Mac Pros are classy, they are really just Intel boxes running OS X, aren't they? Then again, the more I see Steve Jobs fine-tuning the concept that we all call OS X, the more I understand how the ethos at Apple works, and how hard it is to make computers so good that I, as a user, frequently forget that I am using a computer at all.

I think, with all the evidence to hand that things behind the walls of Castle Apple are going well at present. I am happy about that. Not much wiser since this WWDC, but happier, and oddly, much more human. ☺

Alex Rieneck has been a technology commentator since the days of the bone abacus.

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